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Book No. Ray V.2

A
PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL
HISTORY
OF THE
SETTLEMENTS AND TRADE
OF THE
EUROPEANS
IN THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES..
BY THE ABBE RAYNAL.

New Set of Maps adapted to the Work, with an Index.

Volume second.

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A

PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY
OF THE
SETTLEMENTS AND TRADE
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EUROPEANS
IN THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES.

BOOK IV.

VOYAGES, SETTLEMENTS, WARS, AND TRADE, OF THE
FRENCH IN THE EAST INDIES.

WHEN I began this work, I took an oath that I would adhere strictly to truth ; and hitherto I am able conscientiously to declare, that I have not departed from it. May my hand wither, if it should happen, that by a predilection, which is but too frequent, I should either deceive myself or others with respect to the faults of the French nation. I will neither extenuate the good nor the evil which our ancestors have done ; and the Portuguese, the Dutch, and even the English themselves, are the people whom I will call upon to attest my impartiality. Let them read, and pronounce my sentence. If they should find that I have remitted in favour of the French that severity with which I have treated them, I give them leave to class me among the number of those flatterers, who for these two thousand years past, have poisoned the minds of the people, and of their sovereigns ; let them add my volumes to the numerous monuments there are existing of the same kind of meanness ; let them suspect me of having given way to the impressions of terrors, or of having been seduced by the allurements of hopes ; let them treat me with the utmost contempt.

Vol. II.

A

Ancient revolutions of the commerce in France. THE ancient Gauls, almost always at war with each other, had no other intercourse but such as savage nations, whose wants are always few, can have with each other. Their connections abroad were still more circumscribed. Some navigators, from Vannes carried earthen-ware to Great Britain, where they bartered it for dogs, slaves, tin, and furs. Such of these articles as they could not dispose of at home, were conveyed to Marseilles, and exchanged for wines, stuffs, and spices, which were brought there by traders from Italy or Greece.

This kind of traffic was not carried on by all the Gauls. It appears from Cæsar's account, that the inhabitants of Belgia had prohibited the importation of all foreign commodities, as tending to corrupt their morals. They imagined that their own soil was sufficiently fruitful to answer all their wants. The Celtic and Aquitanian Gauls were not so strict. To enable them to pay for the commodities they might procure from the Mediterranean, and for which the demand was continually increasing, they had recourse to a kind of labour that had never before occurred to them: they collected with great care all the gold dust that was brought down with the sand along the stream of several of their rivers.

Although the Romans had neither a turn for trade, nor held it in any kind of estimation, it necessarily increased in Gaul, after they had subdued, and in some measure civilized it. Sea-ports were established at Arles, Narbonne, Bourdeaux, and other places. Magnificent roads were everywhere made, the ruins of which we still behold with astonishment. Every navigable river had its company of merchants, to whom considerable privileges were granted. These were called *nautes*, and were the agents and springs of a general circulation.

This rising spirit was checked by the inroads of the Franks and other barbarous nations; nor was it restored to its former activity, even when these robbers had established themselves in their conquests. To their savage fury succeeded an unbounded passion for wealth, to gratify which, they had recourse to every kind of oppression. Every boat that came to a town was to pay a duty for en-

trance, another for the salute, a third for the bridge, a fourth for approaching the shore, a fifth for anchorage, a sixth for leave to unload, and a seventh for store-room. Land carriages were not more favourably treated, and were exposed to the insufferable tyranny of custom-house officers, who were dispersed all over the country. These excesses were carried so far, that sometimes the goods brought to market did not produce enough to pay the expences incurred before the sale of them. A total discouragement was the necessary consequence of such enormities.

Cloisters soon became the only places where industry prevailed, and manufactures were carried on. The monks were not then corrupted by idleness, intrigue, and debauchery. Useful labours filled up the vacancies of an edifying and retired life. The most humble and robust of them shared the toils of agriculture with their vassals. Those to whom nature had imparted less strength, or more understanding, applied themselves to the cultivation of the neglected and abandoned arts. All of them in silence and retirement were engaged in the service of their country, the substance of which their successors have incessantly devoured, while they disturbed its tranquillity.

If these recluses had not had recourse to any of those iniquitous measures that have led them to the degree of wealth to which we now see, not without indignation, they have attained, they must necessarily have acquired in process of time, as it was one of the immediate effects of their constitution. The founders of monasteries had not the least idea of the consequence, though evident enough of the austerity, they imposed upon a monastic life. They were not aware of the accumulation of riches, the limits of which it is impossible to fix, whenever the annual revenue exceeds the annual expenditure. This expenditure being always the same, and subject to no variation, except that of the circumstances which raise or lower the price of provisions; and the overplus of the revenue being continually accumulating, must at length, however trifling we may suppose it, form a great mass of wealth. The prohibiting statutes enacted with respect to possessions in mortmain, may therefore retard, but can never put an entire stop to, the progress of monastic opulence. The

case is not the same with the families of citizens which are not subservient to any kind of rule. A prodigal son succeeds to an avaricious father, so that expences are never upon the same footing. The fortune is either dissipated, or it is improved. Persons who have laid down rules for religious societies, have done it in the sole view of making holy men ; but their regulations have tended more directly and more effectually to make rich ones.

Dagobert excited the spirit of his countrymen in the seventh century. Fairs were opened, to which the Saxons flocked with tin and lead from England ; the Jews with jewels and gold or silver plate ; the Slavonians with all the metals of the north ; traders from Lombardy, Provence, and Spain, with the commodities of their respective countries, and those they received from Africa, Egypt, and Syria ; the merchants of every province in the kingdom, with whatever their soil and their industry afforded. Unfortunately, this prosperity was of a short duration ; it disappeared under indolent kings, but revived under Charlemagne.

This prince, who might without flattery be ranked with the greatest men recorded in history, had he not been sometimes influenced by sanguinary schemes of conquest, and sullied with acts of persecution and tyranny, seemed to follow the footsteps or those first Romans, whose relaxations from the fatigues of war, were the labours of agriculture. He applied himself to the care of his vast domains, with that closeness and skill which would hardly be expected from the most assiduous man in a private station. All the great men of the state followed his example, and devoted themselves to husbandry, and to those arts which attend, or are immediately connected with it. From that period the French had many of their own productions to barter, and could with great ease make them circulate throughout the immense empire which was then subject to their dominion.

So flourishing a situation presented a fresh allurements to the Normans to indulge the inclination they had for piracy. Those barbarians, accustomed to seek from plunder that wealth which their soil did not afford, poured forth in multitudes out of their inhospitable climate in quest of booty. They attacked all the sea-coasts, but

more especially those of France, which promised the richest spoil, with the greatest avidity. The ravages they committed, the cruelties they exercised, the flames they kindled for a whole century in those fertile provinces, cannot be remembered without horror. During that fatal period nothing was thought of but how to escape slavery or death. There was no intercourse between the several parts of the kingdom, and consequently no trade.

In the meantime the nobles, intrusted with the administration of the provinces, had insensibly made themselves masters of them, and had found means to make their authority hereditary. They had not, indeed, thrown off all dependence on the head of the empire; but, although they retained the humble appellation of vassals, they were not much less formidable to the state than the kings in the neighbourhood of its frontiers. They were confirmed in their usurpations at the memorable era when the sceptre was removed from the family of Charlemagne to that of the Capets. From that time there were no national assemblies, no tribunals, no laws, no government. In that fatal confusion, the sword usurped the place of justice, and the free citizens were forced to embrace servitude, to purchase the protection of a chief who was able to defend them.

Commerce could not possibly flourish when loaded with the shackles of slavery, and in the midst of the continual disturbances occasioned by the most cruel anarchy. Industry is the child of peace; nothing depresses it so much as servitude. Genius languishes when it is not animated by hope and emulation; and neither of these can subsist where there is no property. Nothing is a stronger recommendation of liberty, or more fully proves the rights of mankind, than the impossibility of working successfully to enrich barbarous masters.

None of the kings of France had any conception of this important truth, till they became sensible of it, from experiencing the inconveniences of an authority exposed to perpetual restraint. They therefore endeavoured to limit the power of those subaltern tyrants, who, by ruining their unfortunate vassals, perpetuated the calamities of the monarchy. St. Lewis was the first who introduced trade into the system of government. Before his time it was

only the work of chance and circumstances. He brought it under the regulation of stated laws; and he himself drew up statutes, which have served as a model for those that have since been enacted.

These first steps led the way to measures of greater importance. The old law, which forbade the exportation of all the productions of the kingdom, was still in force, and agriculture was discouraged by this absurd prohibition. The wise monarch removed these fatal impediments; expecting, not without reason, that a free exportation would restore to the nation those treasures which his imprudent expedition into Asia had lavished.

Some political events seconded these salutary views. Before the reign of St. Lewis, the kings of France had but few ports on the ocean, and none on the Mediterranean. The northern coasts were divided between the counts of Flanders and the dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Britany: the rest belonged to the English. The southern coasts were possessed by the counts of Toulouse, and the kings of Majorca, Arragon, and Castile. By this arrangement, the inland provinces could not, without much difficulty, open a communication with the foreign markets. The union of the county of Toulouse with the crown, removed this great obstacle, at least with respect to a part of the French territory.

Philip, the son of St. Lewis, in order to improve the advantages arising from this acquisition, endeavoured to draw to Nismes, a city under his jurisdiction, part of the trade carried on at Montpellier, which belonged to the king of Arragon. The privileges he granted produced the desired effect: but it was soon found that this success was not of much real advantage. The Italians filled the kingdom with spices, perfumes, silks, and all the rich stuffs of the East. The arts had not made sufficient progress in France to admit of their productions being offered in exchange; and the returns of agriculture were inadequate to the expences of so many objects of luxury. A trade of such valuable articles could not be carried on without money, and there was but little in the kingdom, especially since the expeditions of the crusades; although France was then richer than most of the other European nations.

Philip, surnamed the Fair, was sensible of these truths;

he found means to improve agriculture, so as to answer the demands of foreign importations ; and these he reduced, by establishing new manufactures, and improving the old ones. Under this reign the ministry first undertook to guide the hand of the artist, and to direct his labours. The breadth, the quality, and the dressing of the cloths, were fixed ; the exportation of wool, which the neighbouring nations came to purchase in order to manufacture it, was prohibited. These were the least unreasonable measures that could be pursued in those times of ignorance.

Since that period, the progress of the arts was proportioned to the decline of feudal tyranny. The French, however, did not begin to form their taste till the time of their expeditions into Italy. They were dazzled with a multitude of new objects that presented themselves at Genoa, Venice, and Florence. The strictness observed by Anne of Bretagne, under the reigns of Charles VIII and Lewis XII, at first restrained the conquerors from giving full scope to their propensity for imitation ; but no sooner had Francis I invited the women to court, no sooner had Catherine of Medicis crossed the Alps, than the great affected an elegance unknown before since the first foundation of the monarchy. The whole nation was seduced by this alluring example of luxury, and the improvement of the manufactures was the natural consequence.

From Henry II. to Henry IV the civil wars, the unhappy divisions of religion, the ignorance of government, the spirit of finance which began to have its influence in the council ; the barbarous and devouring avarice of men in business, encouraged by the protection they enjoyed ; all these several causes retarded the progress of industry, but could never destroy it. It revived with fresh splendour under the frugal administration of Sully. It was almost extinguished under that of Richelieu and Mazarin, both governed by the farmers of the revenue ; one wholly taken up with his ambition for empire and his spirit of revenge, the other with intrigue and plunder.

No king of France had ever seriously considered the advantages that might accrue from a trade to India, nor had the

First voyages of the French to the East Indies.

emulation of the French been excited by the lustre which other nations derived from it. They consumed more eastern productions than any other nation; they were as favourably situated for procuring them at the first hand; and yet they were content to pay to foreign industry what their own might as well have partaken of.

Some merchants of Rouen had ventured, indeed, in 1503, upon a small expedition; but Gonnevillé, who commanded it, met with violent storms at the Cape of Good Hope, was cast upon unknown lands, and with much difficulty got back to Europe.

In 1601, a society formed in Bretagne fitted out two ships, to endeavour to get a share, if possible, of the riches of the East, which the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch, were contending for. Pyrard, who commanded these ships, arrived at the Maldives, and did not return to his own country till after an unfortunate navigation of ten years.

A new company, headed by one Girard, a native of Flanders, fitted out some ships from Normandy for the island of Java, in 1616 and 1619. They returned with cargoes sufficient to indemnify the adventurers, but not to encourage them to any fresh undertakings.

Captain Reginon, upon the expiration of this fruitless grant in 1633, prevailed upon some merchants of Dieppe, two years after, to enter upon a track which might be productive of great riches, if properly pursued. Fortune baffled the endeavours of the new adventurers. The only advantage gained by these repeated expeditions, was the high opinion that was conceived of Madagascar, which till that time had been neglected by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, who had not found there any of the objects which attracted them to the East.

The favourable impression the French had received of this island, gave rise to a company in 1642, which intended to make a considerable settlement upon it, with a view of securing to their ships the necessary refreshments for sailing further. The charter of this company was to last twenty years; but the cruelties committed by its agents, together with their many acts of perfidy and dishonesty, put an end to its existence before the completion of that period. Its capital was consumed; and in return for all

its expences, it had nothing more than four or five hamlets, situated along the coast, constructed with planks, covered in with leaves, surrounded with stakes, and decorated with the pompous name of forts, because there were a few batteries upon them. The defenders of these wretched huts were reduced to the number of one hundred robbers; whose tyranny daily increased the hatred that had been sworn against their nation. A few small districts, abandoned by the natives, and some rather more extensive, from which a tribute of provisions was exacted by force, these were the only advantages that had been obtained.

The marshal de la Meilleraie seized upon these ruins, and conceived the project of restoring this ill-conducted undertaking for his own private emolument. He met with so little success, that his property sold but for 20,000 livres [833l. 6s. 8d.] which was full as much as it was worth.

At length, in 1664, Colbert undertook to make France a sharer in the East India trade. There were great inconveniencies attending this intercourse with Asia. It could scarce furnish any thing but articles of luxury; it retarded the progress of the arts which the French were labouring with so much success to establish; it procured but very little vent for the national provisions and manufactures; and necessarily occasioned a great exportation of specie. Considerations of so important a nature were calculated to excite suspense in the mind of a minister, whose plans were pursued with no other view but to extend every branch of industry, and to add to the riches of the kingdom. But the French, in imitation of the other Europeans, displayed a determined taste for the luxuries of the East. It was thought that it would be more advantageous, and at the same time more honourable, to go in search of them across an immense ocean, than to receive them from rivals, perhaps from enemies.

The mode of carrying this matter into execution, was already traced out. It was then a maxim so generally received, that such nice and complicated operations could only be managed by an exclusive charter, that the boldest

An East India company is established in France. Encouragements given to this association.

speculator would not have called it in question. An East India company was therefore created, vested with all the privileges enjoyed by those of Holland and England. Colbert went still further; and considering that for the purpose of carrying on great commercial undertakings, there is naturally a degree of confidence existing in republican governments, which cannot be expected in a monarchy, had recourse to every expedient that could produce it.

A charter was granted for fifty years, that the company might be encouraged to form great settlements, with a prospect of reaping the fruits of them.

All foreigners advancing 20,000 livres [833l. 6s. 8d.] were to be deemed Frenchmen, without the privilege of naturalization.

On the like terms, officers, whatever corps they belonged to, were allowed leave of absence, without forfeiting the rights of their post, or their pay.

Whatever was wanted for the building, equipment, or victualing, of the ships, was to be exempted from all the duties of export or import, as well as from those of the admiralty.

The government engaged to pay fifty livres [2l. 1s. 8d.] per ton for all goods exported from France to India, and seventy-five livres [3l. 2s. 6d.] for every ton imported from thence.

It was agreed, that the settlements of the company should be defended with a sufficient military force, and that their outward and homeward bound ships should be furnished with as strong a convoy as exigencies should require.

The ruling passion of the nation was made subservient to this establishment. Hereditary titles and honours were promised to such as should distinguish themselves in the service of the company.

As trade was yet in its infancy in France, and was unable to furnish the fifteen millions [625,000l.] that were to constitute the stock of the new society, the ministry engaged to lend as far as three millions [125,000l.] The nobles, the magistrates, all orders of men, were invited to share the rest. The nation, proud to please their king, who had not yet crushed them with the weight of his

false greatness, came into the proposal with great eagerness.

Madagascar was again destined to be the nursery of the new association. The repeated misfortunes experienced there did not invalidate the idea of its being the best basis for the vast edifice that was to be raised. In order to form a proper judgment of these views, we must endeavour to acquire as thorough a knowledge as possible of this celebrated island.

MADAGASCAR, which is separated from the continent of Africa by the Mozambique channel, is situated at the entrance of the Indian ocean, between the twelfth and twenty-fifth degree of latitude, and between the sixty-second and seventieth degree of longitude. It is three hundred and thirty-six leagues in length, one hundred and twenty in its greatest breadth, and about eight hundred in circumference.

The French establish colonies at Madagascar. Description of that island.

The coasts of this great island are in general unwholesome; an evil arising from natural causes, and which might be remedied. The land which we inhabit has been rendered wholesome merely by the labours of man. In its original state, it was covered with forests and morasses, which corrupted the air. Such is the present state of Madagascar. The rains, as in the other countries situated under the tropics, are periodical. They form rivers, which, in endeavouring to discharge themselves into the ocean, find their mouths blocked up by sands, which the motion of the sea has driven there in the dry season; that is to say, when the volume or rapidity of the waters is not sufficient to overcome this obstacle. The waters stopped by this barrier, flow back again into the plain, where they become stagnant for a certain time, and fill the horizon with destructive exhalations, till at length, surmounting the impediment by which they were confined, they procure themselves an outlet. We shall be convinced of this fact, if we consider that the coasts are unwholesome only in the rainy season; that the column of corrupted air never extends to any distance; that, in the inland parts, the atmosphere is always pure; and the banks are always

wholesome in those places where, from local circumstances, the course of the rivers is uninterrupted.

By whatever winds the navigator may arrive at Madagascar, he meets with nothing but a barren sand. This sterility terminates at the distance of a league or two. Throughout the rest of the island, nature, in perpetual vegetation, produces spontaneously, both in the forests and in the open grounds, cotton, indigo, hemp, honey, white pepper, sago, bananas, the Amboyna cabbage, and the ravendara, a kind of spice little known, with a multitude of other nutritious plants, foreign to our climates. The whole island is covered with palms, cacao, and orange trees, gum plants and woods fit for construction, and useful in all the arts. There is not, properly speaking, any kind of culture, except that of rice. The rushes that grow in the morasses are pulled up, and the seed is carelessly scattered on the ground. Cattle are afterwards made to pass over it, which, by their trampling, push the grain into the soil: the rest is left to chance. There is another species of rice cultivated upon the mountains in the rainy season, and with as little care. These regions are not fertilized by the sweat of men's brows. The fruitfulness of the soil, increased by the prolific quality of the waters, must here be substituted to every kind of labour.

Oxen, sheep, hogs, and goats, feed day and night in the meadows, incessantly springing up afresh, which nature has formed at Madagascar. Neither horses nor buffaloes, nor camels, nor any kind of beast fit for burden or for the saddle, are to be met with here, though every thing seems to bespeak that they would prosper.

It has been an opinion too lightly adopted, that gold and silver were the produce of this island. But it is an established fact, that at no great distance from the bay of Antongil, there are copper mines that yield considerably, and mines of very pure iron in the inland parts.

The origin of the inhabitants of Madagascar, as that of most other people, is lost in extravagant and fabulous accounts. Whether they be natives of the island, or have been transplanted there, is a question which, in all probability, will never be decided. We cannot, however, avoid thinking, that they are not all derived from one common

stock, when we consider the different forms by which they are distinguished.

This variety certainly depends upon the general manner in which islands are formed. In times anterior to the origin of navigation, they have all been connected with some continent from which they have been separated by those natural commotions that are but too frequently renewed. If the island hath been suddenly broken off, we shall find only one race of men upon it. If the adjacent countries have been threatened with this separation a long time before it has taken place, the imminent danger will have set all the different people in motion; and each of them will have flocked in crowds to the spot where they expected to be most secure. In the meanwhile, the dreadful phenomenon will have happened; and the portion of land that had been surrounded with water, will contain different races of men, having neither the same complexion nor the same stature, nor speaking the same language.

We have every reason to think, that this has been the case with the island of Madagascar. In the western parts of the island, we find a people called *Quimos*, who are in general not more than four feet high, and who never grow beyond four feet four inches. It is supposed that they are now reduced to fifteen thousand souls; though they must have been more numerous before the destructive and unfortunate war, which obliged them to quit the spot on which they had first settled. Being driven from their country, they took refuge in a very fertile valley, surrounded with steep rocks, where they live, without having any intercourse with their neighbours. When their former conquerors unite to attack them in this fortunate situation, they drive a great number of oxen to the borders of these mountains. The enemy, who had no other spoil in view, seize upon the cattle, and lay down their arms, to take them up again, when they can succeed in forming another confederacy sufficiently powerful to induce the *Quimos* to purchase peace anew.

This expedient, which is adapted to these weak and timid people, would by no means be suitable to a powerful nation. The pusillanimous sovereign or minister who purchases peace, invites his enemy to make war, and

strengthens him for the purpose with all the money he gives, while he weakens himself in the same proportion. He is a bad politician, who conducts himself as if he had only a few years to live, and who is very little solicitous of the fate of the empire after his death.

Madagascar is divided into several colonies, more or less numerous, and independent of each other. Each of these feeble communities lives in a district that belongs to it, and is governed by its own laws. A considerable degree of authority is lodged in a chief, who is elective in some places, hereditary in others, and sometimes a usurper. He cannot, however, engage in war without the consent of the principal members of the state, nor support it without the voluntary contributions and exertions of his people.

The stripping of the cultivated lands, the stealing of cattle, and the carrying off of women and children, are the ordinary cause of their divisions. These rustic people are tormented with the rage of acquiring possessions by unjust and violent measures, as strongly as the most civilized nations are. Their hostilities are not destructive; but the prisoners are always made slaves.

The people of Madagascar have not a very comprehensive idea of the right of property, from whence an inclination for labour is derived, and which is the principle of defence and of submission to government. Reasons of discontent, convenience, or necessity, easily prevail upon them to quit the spot they live on for another, which is either more fertile, or at a greater distance from their enemies. It frequently happens, even that an inhabitant of Madagascar leaves his country, merely from motives of caprice; and changes his residence again upon any new fancy, or when he is apprehensive of punishment for some outrageous act, or for some theft. He is certain of finding lands to cultivate wherever he goes; for they are never parcelled out. The grounds are usually sown by the community, who afterwards share the produce. Civil right is therefore of little consequence in these regions; but political right is still more confined.

Although the people of Madagascar admit the prevailing doctrine of the two principles, yet they have but a confused idea of it, nor have they any form of worship

whatever. They have not the least conception of the existence of another life, and yet they believe in ghosts: but we are not to expect ideas more connected among barbarians, than we meet with among the most enlightened nations. The most fatal of their prejudices is that which has settled lucky and unlucky days; by which children that are born under unfavourable auspices are inhumanly put to death. This is a cruel error, which hinders or destroys population.

Few people bear pain and affliction with so much patience as the inhabitants of Madagascar. Even the approach of death, the consequence of which their education hath not taught them to fear, never disturbs them. They expect the instant of their dissolution, a period so distressing to us, with a degree of resignation which it is not easy to conceive. It is perhaps a comfort to them to be assured, that they shall not be forgotten, when they are no more. The inhabitants of these savage regions entertain a very high sense of the respect that is due to their ancestors. It is a common thing to see men of all ages go to weep over the grave of their fathers, and to ask advice of them in the most interesting actions of their life.

These robust, and rather well-made islanders, have not the same indifference for the present as they have for the future. As they are never restrained in their inclinations by the ties of morality or religion, or by that enlightened kind of police which puts a stop to the propensities of men, in order to establish the order of society, they are entirely devoted to their passions. They indulge with rapture in festivals, singing, dancing, and strong liquors, and are extravagantly addicted to women. Every instant of an idle sedentary life, free from the cravings of want, is dissipated in sensual pleasures, which are denied by nature to the savages of the north, who exhaust their powers in the search of food necessary for their miserable and precarious existence. Beside the wife whom they marry in ceremony, the inhabitants of Madagascar take as many concubines as they can get. Divorce is common among them, though nothing be so rare as jealousy. Most of them, indeed, esteem themselves honoured in having illegitimate children, when they are of a whiterace. The splend-

our of the origin compensates for the obliquity of the birth.

We may perceive a beginning of knowledge and industry among these people. With silk, cotton, and thread made of the barks of trees, they manufacture some stuffs. They are not entirely ignorant of the art of melting and forging iron. Their earthen-ware is rather agreeable to the eye. In several districts, they practise the mode of expressing their thoughts in writing. They have even books of history, phylic, and astrology, committed to the care of their *Ombis*, who have been improperly considered as priests, and who, in fact, are impostors, who style themselves, and perhaps believe themselves, to be forcerers. This kind of knowledge, which is more diffused in the western part than in the rest of the island, has been brought by the Arabs, who have traded there from time immemorial.

A few distinct acts of anger and rage, committed in the height of some violent passion, have been sufficient to calumniate the whole island of Madagascar, and stigmatize its inhabitants with the title of ferocious. On the contrary, they are naturally sociable, lively, cheerful, vain, and even impressed with sentiments of gratitude. All travellers, who have penetrated into the interior part of the island, have been kindly received there, assisted in their wants, treated as men and brethren. Upon the coasts, where mistrust is usually more prevailing, the navigators have rarely experienced any acts of violence or perfidy. Four-and-twenty Arabian families, which, for a number of generations, had usurped the empire in the province of Anossi, had enjoyed it for a long time unmolested, till they were deprived of it in 1771, without either expulsion, massacre, or oppression. In a word, the language of these islanders readily adapts itself to express sentiments of the utmost tenderness; and this circumstance alone is calculated to give us a very favourable impression of the softness of their manners, and of their social turn.

*Conduct of the
French at Ma-
dagascar.*

SUCH was the state of Madagascar when four French vessels arrived there, in 1665. The company that had sent them out was resolved to form a so-

lid establishment on this island. The project was wise and it did not appear that the execution of it would be expensive.

All the colonies which the Europeans *What they might* have established in America, to obtain *and ought to* the produce of that part of the world ; *have done there.* or all those they have fixed at the Cape of Good Hope, and in the isles of France, of Bourbon, and St. Helena, for the cultivation of their commerce to the Indies, have required enormous expences, a long space of time, and considerable labours. Many of these countries were entirely desert, and in others there were only found inhabitants, whom it was impossible to render useful. Madagascar, on the contrary, presented a soil naturally fertile, and a numerous, tractable, and intelligent set of inhabitants, who wanted only instruction to enable them effectually to assist in any purpose that was intended.

These islanders were harassed with the state of war and anarchy in which they continually lived. They ardently wished for a police which might make them enjoy peace and liberty. It was no matter of doubt, but that, with dispositions so favourable, they would readily concur in any attempts made to civilize them.

Nothing was more easy than to have made this island of considerable utility. With proper attention, Madagascar might have produced a multitude of commodities fit for India, for Persia, for Arabia, and for the continent of Africa. By inviting a few Indians and Chinese to this spot, all the arts and cultures of Asia would have been naturalized in the island. It was easy to construct ships there, because materials were to be found for this purpose of the best quality, and in plenty ; and they might even have been readily equipped, because the inhabitants displayed a turn for navigation. All these innovations would have acquired more solidity than the conquests of the Europeans in the East Indies can ever have ; for the natives of those regions will never adopt our laws, our manners, or our mode of worship ; and consequently they will never have that kind of favourable disposition, which attaches people to a new form of government.

It was impossible that so fortunate a revolution could

have been effected by violence. A numerous, brave, and uncivilized people, would never have submitted to the chains with which a few barbarous foreigners might have wished to load them. It was by the soft mode of persuasion; it was by the seducing prospect of happiness; it was by the allurements of a quiet life; it was by the advantages of our police, by the enjoyments attending our industry, and by the superiority of our talents, that the whole island was to be brought to concur in a plan equally advantageous to both nations.

The system of legislation which it would have been proper to give to these people, should have been adapted to their manners, their character, and their climate. It must have been in every respect the reverse of the legislation of Europe, corrupted and embarrassed by the barbarism of feudal customs. However simple this system might have been, the several parts could only have been proposed successively, and in proportion as the understanding of the people should have become enlightened and improved. Perhaps it might even have been proper to lay aside all thoughts of conciliating to it the minds of those men in whom age had strengthened the prejudices of custom; perhaps it might have been necessary to endeavour to make partizans only of young men, who, formed by our institutions, would, in process of time, have become political missionaries, and might have increased the number of proselytes to the system of government.

The grand system of civilization would still have been promoted, by the intermarriage of the women of the island with the French colonists. This tie, so endearing, and of so tender a nature, would have extinguished those odious distinctions, which cherish perpetual hatred and everlasting division, between people who inhabit the same region, and live under the same laws.

It would have been repugnant to every system of equity and policy, to seize arbitrarily upon any district of land, in order to fix new families upon it. The nation assembled should have been asked for those lands which were unoccupied; and in order to give more solidity to the acquisition, government might have given a price for them which would have been agreeable to these islanders. These lands, thus legitimately acquired, would for the first time have

been legally possessed; and the right of property would gradually have been established from one person to another. In process of time, the several colonies of Madagascar would readily have adopted an innovation, the advantages of which cannot be rendered less conspicuous by the effect of any prejudice.

The more useful the colonies that might have been founded at Madagascar were like to prove, the more proper it was to choose situations well adapted to the purpose of cultivating, extending, encouraging, and preserving these advantages. Exclusive of a settlement which it would, perhaps, have been expedient to form in the interior part of the island, in order to obtain the confidence of the inhabitants in the first instance; it was indispensably necessary to form four upon the coast. One at Saint Austin's Bay, which would have opened on easy communication with the continent of Africa; another at Luquez, where a considerable and a constant degree of heat would have made all the plants of India prosper; the third at Fort Dauphin, which, from its mild and wholesome temperature, was well calculated for the cultivation of corn, and of most European productions; and lastly, the fourth at Tametave, the most fertile, populous, and best cultivated district of the country. This last position deserved even the preference of being made the capital of the colony; and for the following reasons:—

There is no harbour known at Madagascar. It is a mistake to suppose, that it would be possible to form one at Fort Dauphin, by raising a pier upon some shoals which advance into the sea. The labour attending such an enterprise would not only be immense, but the expence would also be useless. It would be impossible that ships which cannot be defended from the hurricanes by the mountains themselves, should ever be sheltered by a pier. Besides, this factitious port, open in part to the fury of the waves, would necessarily be of small extent. The ships would have no sea room; and if once loosened from their anchors, would all run aground; and they would perish without resource upon a coast where the sea is constantly agitated, and where the sands are in continual motion.

The situation at Tametave is different. The bay, when freed from that inconvenient bar, which extends

along all the eastern coast of Madagascar, is very spacious. The anchorage is good, and the vessels are sheltered from the hardest winds. The landing is easy. If the bed of the great river that discharges itself into the bay, were to be digged for the space of a league and a half, ships of the largest burden might then be brought up to the lake of Nosse-Be, where nature has formed an excellent harbour. In the midst of it is an island, the air of which is very pure, and which might be easily defended. There is one fortunate circumstance in this situation, which is, that with a few precautions, the entrance of it might be shut against an enemy's squadrons.

Such were the advantages which the French company might have derived from Madagascar. The conduct of their agents unfortunately destroyed these brilliant expectations. Lost to every sense of shame, they secreted part of the funds entrusted to their management; they waited still more considerable sums in useless and ridiculous expences; they made themselves equally odious to the Europeans, whose labours they ought to have encouraged, as to the natives of the country, whom they should have gained over by gentleness and by favours. Acts of iniquity and misfortunes were multiplied to such a degree, that in 1670 the members of the company thought proper to resign into the hands of government a possession which they held from its gift. The change of administration did not produce better management. Most of the French who had remained in the island were massacred two years after. Those who had escaped this memorable butchery withdrew themselves for ever from a soil which was less stained with their blood than with their crimes.

At different and distant intervals the court of Versailles has had an eye upon Madagascar, but without ever being sensible of its real value. It was necessary that France should lose all her trade, and all her consideration in India, in order to be thoroughly satisfied of the importance of an island, the possession of which would probably have preserved her from these calamities. Since this fatal period, the French have shewn a desire to form a settlement upon it. They ought not to be discouraged by the ill success of the two attempts of 1770 and 1773, because these were made without plan and without means;

and that instead of employing in them the superfluous inhabitants of Bourbon, a set of pacific and wise men, inured to the climate, none but vagabonds collected from the scum of Europe were sent there. Measures more prudent and better concerted cannot fail of having the desired effect. It is not from motives of policy alone that the French should strive against the difficulties inseparable from such an enterprise; the voice of humanity should speak louder, and with greater energy than that of interest.

What glory would it be for France to raise a numerous people from the horrors of barbarism; to give them decent manners, a well regulated policy, wise laws, a beneficent religion; to introduce among them the agreeable, as well as the useful arts, and to raise them to the rank of enlightened and civilized nations! Statesmen, may the wishes of philosophy, may the wishes of a citizen, awaken your attention! If it be a glorious act to change the face of the universe, in order to increase general felicity; and if the honour that results from it belong to those who hold the reins of empire; let me inform you that they are equally accountable to the present age, and to future generations, not only for all the mischief they may do, but likewise for all the good which they might do, and have neglected. If you be desirous of real glory among your contemporaries, what more deserved fame, than that which I propose can you be in pursuit of? If you wish to immortalize your name, consider, that monuments of bronze are more or less rapidly destroyed by time. Intrust the care of your reputation to beings who will perpetuate it by regeneration. The statue is silent, but mankind will speak. Let them, therefore, speak of you with praise. If corruption should afterwards insinuate itself into the wise system of legislation you have established, then it is that you will be truly revered. The age in which you lived will be called to mind, and tears will be bestowed upon your memory. Tears of admiration will be shed for you during your life, and tears of regret many ages after your death.

The India Company had not such elevated views, when in 1670 they thought proper to abandon Madagascar. At that period it was that their ships sailed directly to India.

By the intrigues of Marcara, a native of Ispahan, but in the French interest, they obtained leave to establish factories on several places on the coast of the peninsula. They even attempted to secure a share of the Japan trade. Colbert offered to send none but protestants; but by the artifices of the Dutch, the French were denied an entrance into that empire, as the English had been before.

The French make Surat the centre of their trade. SURAT had been pitched upon for the centre of all the business which the company was to carry on in these parts. It was from this capital of Guzarat that all orders were to be issued for the inferior settlements: and there it was that the different merchandize destined for Europe was to be collected.

Account of the Guzarat, in which this city is situated. GUZARAT forms a peninsula between the Indus and Malabar. It is about one hundred and sixty miles in length, and nearly the same in breadth. It is separated from the kingdom of Agra by the mountains of Arva. There is not a province in Indostan in which the soil is more fertile, better watered, or intersected by a greater number of rivers. It were to be wished, that the climate were not burnt up during three months in the year, by a most violent south wind. This country was already in possession of great advantages, when a foreign colony came to increase its prosperity.

In the seventh century, the last king of Persia, of the dynasty of the Sasanides, was dethroned by the Mohammedans. Several of his subjects, dissatisfied with the conqueror, took refuge in the province of Sablutan, from whence, a century after, they came to the island of Ormus. In a short time they set sail for India, and landed fortunately at Diu. Not contented still with this asylum, they reembarked; and the waves drove them upon a pleasant shore between Daman and Bacaim. The prince who governed that district consented to receive them, on condition only that they should reveal the mysteries of their faith; that they should lay down their arms; that they should speak the language of the country; that their women should go abroad unveiled, and that they should cele-

brate their nuptials at the close of the evening, according to the custom of the country. As these stipulations contained nothing repugnant to their religious notions, the people who fled there for protection agreed to them. A piece of ground was allotted them, where they built a town, from whence they soon spread further up the country.

A habit of labour happily contracted by necessity made them prosper. Prudent enough not to interfere with affairs of government or war, they enjoyed a profound tranquillity in the midst of all the revolutions that happened from time to time. In consequence of this circumspection, and of the affluence in which they lived, their number increased considerably. They always remained a separate people, distinguished by the name of Parsees, never intermarrying with the Indians, and adhering to the religious principles which had obliged them to quit their country. Their tenets were those of Zoroaster, somewhat altered by time, ignorance, and the rapaciousness of the priests.

The industry and activity of the new inhabitants, communicated itself to the hospitable nation that had so wisely given them an asylum. Sugar, corn, indigo, and other productions, were naturalized upon a soil, which before had been principally covered with rice grounds. The fruits of the earth, and cattle, were multiplied, varied, and brought to perfection. The fields of India displayed, for the first time, those hedges, inclosures, and other useful and rural objects which embellish and enrich some of our regions. Manufactures made an equal progress with cultivation. Cotton assumed a more beautiful appearance, and silk was at length manufactured in the province. The increase of subsistence, of labour, and of population, extended, in process of time, foreign connections.

The splendour of Guzarat excited the ambition of two formidable powers. While the Portuguese annoyed it on the side of the sea, by the ravages they committed, by the victories they gained, and by the conquest of Diu, justly esteemed the bulwark of the kingdom; the moguls, already masters of the north of India, and eager to ad-

vance toward the southern parts, where trade and riches were to be found, threatened it from the continent.

Badur, a Patan by birth, who then reigned over Guzarat, saw how impossible it would be for him at once to withstand two such enemies, equally bent upon his destruction. He thought he had less to fear from a people whose forces were separated from his dominions by immense seas, than from a nation firmly settled on the frontiers of his provinces. This consideration made him determine to be reconciled with the Portuguese. The concessions he made induced them to join with him against Akbar, whose activity and courage they dreaded little less than he did.

This alliance disconcerted men who thought they had only Indians to deal with. They could not think of engaging with Europeans, who were reputed invincible. The natives, not yet recovered from the consternation into which these conquerors had thrown them, represented them to the mogul soldiers as men come down from heaven, or risen from the waters, of a species infinitely superior to the Asiatics, and far surpassing them in valour, genius, and knowledge. The army, seized with a panic, was urging the generals to march back to Delhi, when Akbar, convinced that a prince who undertakes a great conquest must command his own forces, hastened to his camp. He did not hesitate to promise his troops that they should subdue a people enervated by luxury, riches, pleasures, and the heat of the climate; and that the glory of purging Asia of that handful of banditti was reserved for them. The army, thus encouraged, expressed their satisfaction, and marched on with confidence. They soon came to an engagement; the Portuguese, ill seconded by their allies, were surrounded and cut to pieces; Badur fled, and never appeared again. All the cities of Guzarat hastened to open their gates to the conqueror. This fine kingdom, in 1565, became a province of that vast empire which was soon to subdue all Indostan.

Under the mogul government, which was then in its full glory, Guzarat enjoyed more tranquillity than before. This state of security gave a new impulse to every individual. All the powers of the mind were unfolded; and every species of industry acquired a degree of improve-

ment before unknown. It became necessary to find a *staple where all these treasures were to be collected*; and Surat came into possession of this valuable prerogative.

AT the beginning of the thirteenth century, Surat was nothing more than a mean hamlet, consisting of some fishermen's huts, standing upon the river Tapti, at a few miles distance from the ocean. The advantage of its situation drew there some workmen and some merchants. They were plundered three or four times by pirates; and it was to put a stop to these destructive inroads, that a fortress was built in 1524. At this period, the place acquired a degree of importance which had considerably increased, when the moguls made themselves masters of it. As this was the only maritime town which had then submitted to their yoke, they contracted the habit of providing themselves with all their articles of luxury from thence. On the other hand, the Europeans, who had not any of the great settlements they have since made at Bengal and on the coast of Coromandel, bought most of their Indian merchandize there. They were all collected at this spot, as the people of Surat had taken care to form a navy superior to that of their neighbours.

Their ships, which lasted for ages, were mostly of a thousand or twelve hundred tons burthen. They were built of a very strong wood, called teck. Instead of launching them with a costly apparatus and complicated engines, they let the tide into the dock, as we have done since, and thus set them afloat. The cordage was made of the outward bark of the cocoa tree; it was rougher and less pliable than ours, but at least as strong. If their cotton sails were neither so strong nor so lasting as our hempen ones, they were more easily folded, and less apt to be torn. Instead of pitch, they made use of the gum of a tree called damar, which was as good or better. The skill of their officers, though but moderate, was sufficient for the seas and the seasons in which they sailed. With regard to their sailors, commonly called lascars, the Europeans have found them serviceable in their voyages from one part of India to another. They have even been

employed successfully in bringing home into our stormy latitudes such ships as had lost their crews.

When we hardly suspected that commerce was founded on any certain principles, we found that these principles were already known and practised in this part of Asia. Money was to be had there at a low price, and bills of exchange might be obtained for every market in India. Insurances for the most distant navigations were very common. Such was the honesty of these traders, that bags of money ticketed and sealed by the bankers, would circulate for years, without ever being counted or weighed. Fortunes were proportioned to the facility with which they were to be acquired by industry. Those of five or six millions [about 240,000*l.* on an average] were not uncommon, and some were even more considerable.

Manners of the inhabitants of Surat.

THESE fortunes were mostly possessed by the Banians, a set of traders noted for their honesty. A few moments were sufficient for them to complete the most important concerns. These were generally transacted in the public markets. The person who wished to sell, announced, in few words, and in a low voice, the value of his merchandize. He was answered by another man taking hold of his hand in a concealed manner. The buyer used to signify, by the number of fingers which he bent, or extended, how much less than the price required he meant to give; and thus the bargain was most frequently concluded, without a single word having passed between the parties. In order to ratify it, the contractors used to take hold of each other's hand a second time; and an agreement made with this degree of simplicity was always inviolable. If difficulties arose, a circumstance which very rarely happened, these prudent men preserved, in the most complicated discussions, an evenness of temper, and a degree of politeness, which it would not be easy for us to form any conception of.

Their children, who assisted at all bargains, were early trained to this gentleness of manners. Upon the first dawning of reason, they were initiated into all the mysteries of trade. It was a common thing to see a child, of ten or twelve years old, able to supply his father's place.

What a contrast, what a difference, between this and the education of our children; and yet, what a distance between the attainments of the Indians and the progress of our knowledge!

Such of the Banians as had Abyssinian slaves, a circumstance very uncommon among these good-natured men, treated them with a degree of humanity which must appear singular to us. They brought them up as if they had been of their own family, trained them to business, advanced them money to enable them to trade for themselves, and not only suffered them to enjoy the profits, but even allowed them to dispose of these advantages in favour of their descendants, if they had any.

The expences of the Banians were not proportioned to their fortunes. As they were restrained by the principles of their religion from eating meat, or drinking strong liquors, they lived upon fruits, and a few plain dishes. They never departed from this frugality, except upon the settlement of their children. On this single occasion, no expence was spared for the entertainment, the music, the dancing, and the fireworks. Their whole ambition was to tell how much the wedding had cost. Sometimes it amounted to a hundred thousand crowns [12,500*l*.]

Even their women had a taste for this simplicity of manners; and all their ambition consisted in making themselves agreeable to their husbands. Perhaps the great veneration, in which they held the nuptial tie, arose from the custom of marrying them in their earliest infancy. That sentiment, was in their opinion, the most sacred part of their religion. They never allowed themselves the least conversation with strangers. Less reserve would not have satisfied their husbands, who could not hear, without astonishment, of the familiarity that prevailed between the two sexes in Europe. When they were told, that this freedom was attended with no ill consequence, they were not convinced; but shook their heads, and answered by one of their proverbs, which signifies, “that if you bring butter too near the fire, you can hardly keep it from melting.”

With different customs, the Parsees, had still a more respectable character. They were robust, handsome, and indefatigable men, adapted to all kinds of labour, but

excelling particularly in the building of ships, and in agriculture. Such was their mildness and upright conduct, that they were never called up before a magistrate for any act of violence, or any fraudulent contract. The serenity of their minds was painted on all their features, and in every look; and their conversations was animated by a temperate cheerfulness. They delighted in rhymes, and seldom spoke even about the most serious affairs, otherwise than in verse. They had no fixed place of worship; but they used to assemble every morning and evening upon the high road, or near a fountain, to adore the rising and setting sun. Even the sight of the least spark of fire interrupted all their occupations, and excited their sensibility, in the contemplation of that beneficent luminary. Instead of burning the bodies of their dead, as the Indians did, they deposited them in towers of an extreme height, where they served as food to birds of prey. Their predilection for the followers of their religion, did not prevent them from being moved with the afflictions of all men, whom they assisted with generosity. Their pity extended itself even to animals. One of their most favourite inclinations was to buy slaves, to give them a good education, and to restore them afterwards to liberty. Their number, their union with each other, and their riches, sometimes rendered them suspicious to government; but these prejudices never prevailed for any length of time, against the peaceable and regular conduct of these good people. The only thing they could be censured for, was, a disgusting uncleanness, under the appearance of the most refined neatness, and a too frequent use of an intoxicating kind of liquor, peculiar to themselves. Such were the Parsees at their arrival in India; such have they maintained themselves in the midst of the revolutions that have so frequently overturned the asylum they had chosen; and such do they still remain.

How widely distant were the moguls from these pure and austere manners! No sooner had these mohammedans acquired the possession of Surat, than they embarked in multitudes to go to Mecca. Several of these pilgrims used to stop at the port before their voyage; and a still greater number at their return. The conveniences of life, which were more multiplied in this famous city than in the

rest of the empire, even induced many of the most opulent to fix their residence there. Their days were spent in indolence, or in pleasure. One part of the morning was employed in taking pains to arch their eyebrows, to settle their beards, and to paint their nails, and the inside of their hands. The rest of the day was devoted to riding on horseback, smoking, drinking coffee, or perfuming themselves; or was spent in reclining upon beds of roses, to hear fabulous stories recounted, and in cultivating the poppy, a kind of amusement which had the most powerful attractions for them.

The entertainments in which these voluptuous men frequently indulged themselves, in order to prevent the tedium of a too uniform kind of life, were begun by an astonishing profusion of refreshments, sweetmeats, and the most exquisite perfumes. These quiet amusements were followed by feats of strength or agility usually exercised by the natives of Bengal. These were succeeded by music, which might, perhaps, have been grating to a nice ear, although these orientalists delighted in it. The night was ushered in by fireworks of a less glaring light than ours, and the rest of it was exhausted by successive bands of dancers, more or less numerous according to the rank or opulence of those in whose service they were engaged. When a satiety of pleasures invited to repose, a kind of violin was introduced, which, by soft, uniform, and frequently repeated sounds, lulled them to sleep. The most corrupt of them used to throw themselves into the arms of some young Abyssinian slave, and employed every artifice practised in these regions, to heighten this most infamous of all passions.

The women were never admitted to these diversions, but they had also their dances to themselves, and indulged in other amusements. The preference which their husbands generally gave to courtezans, stifled in their heart every sentiment of affection to them, and consequently of jealousy among themselves. Accordingly, they lived together in a tolerable state of harmony. They even went so far as to rejoice when any new companion was announced to them, because this was an increase of their society. Nevertheless, they had a great influence in all important affairs, and a mogul was almost always determined by the

advice of his harem. Such of these wives as had no children, frequently went out to visit relations of their own sex. The rest might have enjoyed the same liberty, had they not preferred the honour of their sons, which is singularly made to depend upon the opinion entertained of the virtue of their mothers. They educated their children themselves with much care and tenderness, and never parted from them, not even when they quitted their father's house.

If magnificence and conveniences could supply the place of love and sentiment, a harem would have been a most delightful place of residence: every thing that could incite agreeable sensations, was lavished with profusion in these retreats, impenetrable to man. The pride of the moguls had even ordained, that the women who should be admitted to visit them, should be presented with very rich presents the first time of their coming, and should always meet with a reception agreeable to the voluptuous taste of these climates. The European ladies, whose familiarity with the other sex was revolting to Asiatic prejudices, and who for that reason were thought to be of a very inferior tribe, were seldom allowed to penetrate into this kind of sanctuary. One of them, well known in England by her talents, her graces, and her spirit of observation, was distinguished from the rest. The preference granted to Mrs. Draper enabled her to see and examine every thing. She did not find in these unhappy women, living in a state of confinement, that air of disdain or embarrassment, which the little opportunity of exerting their faculties might have given them. Their manners appeared to her frank and easy; and their conversation was distinguished by simplicity and softness.

Although the other nations settled at Surat did not carry every species of voluptuousness to excess, as the moguls did, yet they were not without their pleasures; in a city where the public edifices were generally deficient in taste and symmetry. Private houses had, indeed, no kind of appearance; but in all those belonging to opulent persons, gardens were seen filled with the most beautiful flowers; subterraneous dwellings contrived against the intense heats prevailing through part of the year; and saloons, where fountains were playing in basins of marble,

and which, by their freshness and murmurings, invited them to soft repose.

One of the customs most universally adopted was bathing; and after the bath, the body was rubbed, or kneaded, as it were, like dough. This operation gave a spring to the different parts of the body, and an easy circulation to the fluids. The person who had undergone it thought himself almost a new being. The sort of harmony which it re-established throughout all the machine, led to a kind of intoxication, which excited an infinite variety of delightful sensations. This custom was said to be brought into India from China; and some epigrams of Martial, and declamations of Seneca, seem to hint, that it was not unknown to the Romans at the time when they refined upon every pleasure, as the tyrants who enslaved those masters of the world afterwards refined upon every torture.

THERE was another pleasure, still of a higher nature, perhaps, at Surat. This was derived from its female dancers, or *balliaderes*, a name which the Europeans have always given them, from the Portuguese. *Description of the balliaderes, more voluptuous at Surat.*

Numbers of these are collected together in seminaries of pleasure. The most accomplished of these societies are devoted to the richest and most frequented pagodas. Their destination is to dance in the temples on their great festivals, and to be subservient to the pleasures of the bramins. These priests, who have not taken the artful and deceitful vow of renouncing the enjoyment of all pleasures, in order to have an opportunity of indulging in them more freely, choose rather to have women of their own, than at once to defile the state of celibacy or wedlock. They do not invade another man's right by adultery, but are so highly jealous of the dancers, whose worship and vows they share with the gods, that they never suffer them, without reluctance, to contribute to the amusement even of kings and great men.

The rise of this singular institution is not known. Probably one bramin, who had a concubine, or a wife, associated with another bramin, who had likewise his concu-

bine, or his wife ; and, in process of time, the mixture of so many bramins and women occasioned so many acts of infidelity, that the women became common to all those priests. Let but a number of single persons, of both sexes, be collected in a cloister, and a commonality of men and women will soon take place.

By this mutual intercourse jealousy was probably extinguished ; and the women were not uneasy at the increase of their numbers, nor the bramins at that of their order. It was rather a new conquest than a rivalry.

It is no less probable, that, in order to palliate the infamy of this licentiousness in the eyes of the people, all these women were consecrated to the service of the altar ; and that the people readily consented to this kind of superstition, as it insured their wives and daughters from seduction, by confining the lawless desires of these monks to one particular spot.

The contrivance of stamping a sacred character upon these courtezans, might possibly make parents the more willing to part with their beautiful daughters, and to consent that they should follow their calling, and devote themselves to these seminaries, from whence the superannuated women might return to society without disgrace : for there is no crime that may not be sanctified, no virtue that may not be debased, by the intervention of the gods. The very notion of a Supreme Being may, in the hands of a crafty priest, be made subversive of all morality. He will affirm, not that such a thing is pleasing to the gods, because it is good ; but that such a thing is good, because it is pleasing to the gods.

The bramins wanted only to gain another point, in order to complete this institution ; which was, to persuade the people that it was decent, holy, and pleasing to the gods, to marry a balliadere in preference to all other women, and consequently to induce them to solicit the remains of their debaucheries as a particular mark of favour.

In every city there are other companies, not so select as the former, for the amusement of the rich, and others for their wives. Persons of every religion, and of every cast may employ them. There are even strolling companies of them, conducted by old women, who, having

been themselves trained up in these seminaries, are promoted in time to the direction of them.

These handsome girls have the custom, as singular as it is disgusting, of being always followed by an old deformed musician, whose employment is to beat time with an instrument of brass, which the Europeans lately borrowed of the Turks to add to their military music, and which in India is called a *tam*. The man who holds it, is continually repeating that word with such vehemence, that by degrees he works himself up into dreadful convulsions; while the balliaderes, intoxicated with the desire of pleasing, and the sweets with which they are perfumed, are at length transported beyond their senses.

Their dances are, in general, love pantomimes: the plan, the design, the attitudes, the time, the airs, the cadence of these ballets, are all expressive of this passion, with all its raptures and extravagances.

Every thing conspires to the amazing success of these voluptuous women; the art and richness of their attire, as well as their ingenuity in setting off their beauty. Their long black hair falling over their shoulders, or braided and turned up, is loaded with diamonds, and struck with flowers. Their necklaces and bracelets are enriched with precious stones. Even their nose-jewels, an ornament which shocks us at first sight, has something pleasing in it, and sets off all the other ornaments by a certain symmetry, the effect of which, though inexplicable, is yet sensibly felt by degrees.

Nothing can equal the care they take to preserve their breasts, as one of the most striking marks of their beauty. To prevent them from growing large or ill-shaped, they inclose them in two cases, made of an exceeding light wood, which are joined together, and buckled behind. These cases are so smooth and so supple, that they give way to the various attitudes of the body, without being flattened, and without injuring the delicacy of the skin. The outside of these cases is covered with a leaf of gold studded with diamonds. This is certainly one of the most refined kind of ornaments, and the best calculated to preserve beauty. They take it off and put it on again with singular facility. This covering of the breast does not

prevent the palpitations, heavings, and tender emotions of it from being perceived: it conceals nothing that can contribute to excite desire.

Most of these dancers imagine it an addition to the beauty of their complexion, and the impression of their looks, to trace a black circle round their eyes with a hair bodkin, dipped in the powder of antimony. This borrowed beauty, celebrated by all the eastern poets, and which appeared very singular at first to the Europeans, has at length become perfectly agreeable to them.

The whole life, the whole employment, the whole felicity of the balliaderes, consists in the art of pleasing. It is not easy to resist their seducing manners. They are even preferred to those beauties of Cassimere, who fill the seraglios of Indostan, as the fair Georgians and Circassians do those of Ispahan and Constantinople. The modesty, or rather the reserve of proud slaves, sequestered from the society of men, cannot balance the miraculous arts of these expert courtezans.

Extent of the commerce of Surat.

Revolutions it has experienced.

THEY were nowhere so much in repute as at Surat, the richest and most populous city in India. It began to decline in 1664; and was pillaged by the famous Sevagi, who carried off twenty-five or thirty millions [about 1,200,000*l.* on an average.] The plunder would have been infinitely greater, had not the English and Dutch escaped the public calamity, by the care they had taken to fortify their factories, and had not the most valuable effects been lodged in the castle, which was out of the enemy's reach. This loss made the inhabitants more cautious. They built walls round the city to prevent the like misfortune, the effects of which were removed, when the English, in 1686, with shameful and inexcusable rapacity, stopped all the ships that were fitting out at Surat to be dispatched to the several seas. This piracy, which lasted three years, deprived this famous mart of almost every branch of trade that was not its own peculiar property. The town was nearly reduced to its own natural riches.

Other pirates have since infested those latitudes, and

from time to time disturbed the trade of Surat. Even the caravans, that carried the merchandize to Agra, to Delhi, and all over the empire, were not always secured from the attacks of the subjects of the independent rajahs, which they met with on the several roads. A singular expedient was formerly contrived for the security of the caravans, which was, to put them under the protection of a woman or child, of a race esteemed sacred by the nations they dreaded. When the banditti appeared, the guardians of the caravans threatened to destroy themselves if they persisted in their resolution of plundering it, and actually did so if they did not yield to their remonstrances. These profligate men, who had not been restrained by respect of blood held sacred, were excommunicated, degraded, and cast out of their tribe. The dread of these severe punishments was sometimes a check upon avarice; but since universal commotions have prevailed in Indostan, no consideration can allay the thirst of gold.

Notwithstanding all these misfortunes, Surat is still a great trading city. The produce of the numberless manufactures throughout Guzarat is deposited in its warehouses. A great part is carried into the inland countries; the rest is conveyed to all parts of the globe by continual voyages.

The goods more commonly known are, 1st, dutties, a kind of coarse unbleached cloth, worn in Persia, Arabia, Abyssinia, and the eastern coast of Africa; and blue linens, which are disposed of in the same manner, and are likewise sold to the English and Dutch for their Guinea trade.

2. The blue and white checks of Cambaya, which are worn for mantles in Arabia and Turkey: some are coarse, and some fine, and some even mixed with gold for the use of the rich.

3. The white linens of Barokia, so well known by the name of bastas. As they are extremely fine, they make summer castans for the Turks and Persians. The sort of muslin, with a gold stripe at each end, with which they make their turbans, is manufactured at the same place.

4. The printed calicoes of Amadabat, the colours of which are as bright, as fine, and as durable, as those of Coromandel. They are worn in Persia, in Turkey, and

in Europe. The rich people of Java, Sumatra, and the Molucca islands, make pagnes and coverlets of these chintzes.

5. The gauzes of Bairapour; the blue ones are worn by the common people in Persia and Turkey for their summer clothing, and the red ones by persons of higher rank. The Jews, who are not allowed by the Porte to wear white, make their turbans of these gauzes.

6. Mixed stuffs of silk and cotton, plain, striped, some with satin stripes, some mixed with gold and silver. If they were not so dear, they would be esteemed even in Europe for the brightness of their colours, and the fine execution of their flowers, though their patterns are so indifferent. They soon wear out, but this is of little consequence in the seraglios of Turkey and Persia, where they are used.

7. Some are silk, called tapis. These are pagnes of several colours, much esteemed in the eastern parts of India. Many more would be woven, if it had not been necessary to use foreign materials, which enhance the price too much.

8. Shawls, very light, warm, and fine cloths, made of the wool of Cassimere. They are dyed of different colours, striped, and flowered. They are worn for a winter dress in Turkey, Persia, and the more temperate parts of India. With this fine wool, turbans are woven, that are ell-wide, and a little more than three ells long, which sell for as much as a thousand crowns [125l.] Though this wool be sometimes manufactured at Surat, the finest works of this kind are made at Cassimere.

Beside the prodigious quantity of cotton made use of in the manufactures of Surat, seven or eight thousand bales at least are annually dispatched to Bengal. A much greater quantity is sent to China, Persia, and Arabia, when the crops are very plentiful. If they are moderate, the overplus is carried down the Ganges, where it is always sold at a higher price.

Though Surat receives, in exchange for her exports, porcelain from China; silk from Bengal and Persia; masts and pepper from Malabar; gums, dates, dried fruits, copper, and pearls, from Persia; perfumes and slaves from Arabia; great quantities of spices from the Dutch; iron,

lead, cloth, cochineal, and some hardwares, from the English; the balance is so much in her favour, as to bring in yearly twenty-five or twenty-six millions of livres [from 1,041,666l. 13s. 4d. to 1,083,333l. 6s. 8d.] in ready money. The profit would be much greater, if the riches of the court of Delhi were not conveyed into another channel.

This balance, however, could never rise again to what it was when the French settled at Surat in 1668. Their leader's name was Caron. He was a merchant of French extraction, who was grown old in the service of the Dutch company. Hamilton says, that this able man, who had ingratiated himself with the emperor of Japan, had obtained leave to build a house for his masters on the island where the factory stood which was under his direction. This building proved to be a castle. The natives, who knew nothing of fortification, did not entertain any suspicion of it. They surprised some pieces of cannon that were sending from Batavia, and informed the court of what was going forward. Caron was ordered to repair to Jeddo, to give an account of his conduct. As he had nothing reasonable to allege in his vindication, he was treated with great severity and contempt. His beard was plucked up by the roots, a fool's cap and coat were put upon him, and in this condition he was exposed to the insults of the populace, and banished from the empire. The reception he met with at Java gave him a disgust against the interest he had espoused; and, actuated by revenge, he went over to the French, and became their agent.

SURAT, where they had fixed him, did not answer his idea of a chief settlement. He disliked his situation; he lamented his being obliged to purchase his safety by submission; he foresaw it would be a disadvantage to carry on trade in competition with richer nations, who knew more, and were in greater esteem, than themselves. He wished to find an independent port in the centre of India, or in some of the Spice islands, without which he thought it impossible for any company to support itself. The bay of Trinquemale, in the island of Cey-

Enterprize of the French on the islands of Ceylon and St. Thomas. Their settlement at Pondicherry.

lon, appeared to him to unite all these advantages; and he accordingly sailed for that place with a powerful squadron, which had been sent him from Europe, under the command of La Haye, who was to act under his direction. The French believed, or feigned to believe, that a settlement might be made there, without encroaching upon the rights of the Dutch, whose property had never been acknowledged by the sovereign of the island, with whom the former had entered into a treaty.

All that was alleged might indeed be true, but the event was not the more successful. A project, which ought to have been kept a profound secret, was divulged; an expedition, which ought to have been effected by surprise, was executed deliberately; and the French were intimidated by a fleet which was not in a condition to fight, and which could not possibly have received orders to hazard an engagement. The greater part of the ships' crews, and of all the land forces, perished by want and sickness; some men were left in a small fort that had been erected, where they were soon compelled to surrender. With the remaining few who had survived the hardships of this expedition, the French went in search of provisions on the coast of Coromandel; but finding none either on the Danish settlement of Tranquebar, or anywhere else, impelled by despair, they attacked St. Thomas, where they were informed there was great plenty.

This town, which had long been in a flourishing condition, had been built by the Portuguese above a hundred years before. The king of Golconda having conquered the Carnatic, did not see without regret, so important a place in foreign hands, he sent his generals to attack it in 1662, and they made themselves masters of it. The fortifications, though considerable and in good repair, did not stop the progress of the French, who took them by storm in 1672. They were soon attacked here, and were forced to surrender two years after; because the Dutch, who were at war with Lewis XIV, joined with the Indians to expel them.

This last event would have entirely ruined the enterprise, after all the expence the government had been at to support the company, had not Martin been one of the merchants sent on board La Haye's squadron. He col-

lected the remains of the two colonies of Ceylon and St. Thomas, and with them he peopled the little town of Pondicherry, that had been lately ceded to him, and was rising to a city, when the company entertained good hopes of a new settlement, which they had now an opportunity of forming in India.

SOME missionaries had preached the gospel at Siam. They had gained the love of the people by their doctrine and by their behaviour. Plain, good-natured, and humane men, without intrigue or avarice, they gave no jealousy to the government nor to the people; they had inspired them with respect and love for the French in general, and in particular for Lewis XIV.

The French are invited to Siam. Description of that kingdom.

A Greek, of a restless and ambitious spirit, named Constantine Faulkon, in his travels to Siam, had so far engaged the affections of the prince, that in a short time he raised him to the post of prime minister, or barcalon; an office which nearly answers to the ancient *maires* of the palace of France.

Faulkon governed both the people and the king in the most despotic manner. The prince was weak, a valetudinarian, and had no issue. His minister conceived a project to succeed him; possibly to dethrone him. It is well known that these attempts are as easy and as frequent in absolute governments, as they are difficult and uncommon in countries where the prince governs by the rules of justice; where the origin and measure of his authority is regulated by fundamental and immutable laws, which are under the guardianship of numbers of able magistrates. There the enemies of the sovereign shew that they are enemies of the state; there they find themselves soon thwarted in their designs by all the forces of the nation; because, by rebelling against the chief, they rebel against the laws which are the standing and unalterable will of the nation.

Faulkon formed the design of making the French subservient to his scheme, as some ambitious men had formerly made use of a guard of six hundred Japanese, who had often disposed of the crown of Siam. He sent ambassa-

dors into France in 1684, to make a tender of his master's alliance, to offer sea-ports to the French merchants, and to ask for ships and troops.

The ostentatious vanity of Lewis XIV took advantage of this embassy. The flatterers of that prince, who was too much extolled, though he certainly deserved commendation, persuaded him, that his fame, spread throughout the world, had procured to him the homage of the East. He was not satisfied with the enjoyment of these vain honours; but endeavoured to improve the dispositions of the king of Siam to the benefit of the India company, and still more of the missionaries. He sent out a squadron in which there were a greater number of jesuits than of traders; and in the treaty which was concluded between the two kings, the French ambassadors, directed by the jesuit Tachard, attended much more to the concerns of religion than to those of commerce.

The company still entertained great hopes of the settlement at Siam, and these hopes were not ill-grounded.

That kingdom, though divided by a ridge of mountains that is continued till it meets with the rocks of Tartary, is so prodigiously fruitful, that many of its cultivated lands yield two hundred per cent. Some will even bear plentiful crops spontaneously. The corn, collected as it was at first produced, without care, and without trouble, left as it were to nature, falls off and perishes in the field where it grew, in order to vegetate again in the waters of the stream that flows through the kindom.

There is, perhaps, no country where fruits grow in such plenty and variety, or are so wholesome, as in this delightful spot. Some are peculiar to the country; and those which are equally the produce of other countries have a much finer smell, and are much higher flavoured, than in any other part of the world.

The earth, always covered with these treasures which are constantly springing up afresh, also conceals, under a very superficial surface, mines of gold, copper, loadstone, iron lead, and caline, a species of tin, which is highly valued throughout Asia.

All these advantages are rendered useless by the most

dreadful tyranny. A prince, corrupted by his power, while he is indulging in his seraglio, oppresses his people by his caprices, or suffers them to be oppressed by his indolence. At Siam there are no subjects, all are slaves. The men are divided into three classes : the first serve as a guard to the monarch, till his lands, and are employed in different manufactures in his palace. The second are appointed to public labours, and to the defence of the state. The third class are destined to serve the magistrates, the ministers, and principal officers of the kingdom. Every Siamese advanced to any eminent post is allowed a certain number of men who are at his disposal ; so that the salaries annexed to great officers are well paid at the court of Siam, because they are not paid in money, but in men, who cost the prince nothing. These unfortunate people are registered at the age of sixteen. Every one on the first summons must repair to the post assigned him upon pain of being put in irons, or condemned to the bastinado.

In a country where all the men must work for the government during six months in the year, without being paid or subsisted, and during the other six to earn a maintenance for the whole year ; in such a country, the very lands must feel the effects of tyranny, and consequently there is no property. The delicious fruits that enrich the gardens of the monarch and the nobles, are not suffered to ripen in those of private men. If the soldiers who are sent out to examine the orchards discover some tree laden with choice fruits, they never fail to mark it for the tyrant's table, or that of his ministers. The owner becomes the guardian of it, and is answerable for the fruit under very severe penalties.

The men are not only slaves to men, but also to the beasts. The king of Siam keeps a great number of elephants. Those of his palace are particularly taken care of, and have extraordinary honours paid to them. The meanest have fifteen slaves to attend them, who are constantly employed in cutting hay, and gathering bananas and sugar-canes for them. The king takes so much pride in these creatures, which are of no real use, that he estimates his power rather by their number than by that of his provinces. Under pretence of feeding these animals

well, their attendants will drive them into gardens, and cultivated lands, that they may trample upon them, unless the owners will purchase an exemption from these vexations by continual presents. No man would dare to enclose his field against the king's elephants, many of whom are decorated with honourable titles, and advanced to the highest dignities in the state.

These horrors are revolting to our minds; and yet we have no right to discredit them; we who boast of some philosophy, and of a milder kind of government; and who nevertheless live in a kingdom where the wretched peasant is loaded with irons, if he should dare to mow his meadow, or to disturb his field during the season of the coupling and hatching of the partridges; where he is obliged to leave his vines to the mercy of the rabbits, and suffer his harvest to become a prey to deers, stags, and boars; and where he would be sentenced to the galleys, if he had the boldness to strike, either with his whip or with a stick, any of these voracious animals.

Such various acts of tyranny make the Siamese detest their native country, though they consider it as the best upon earth. Most of them fly from oppression into the forests, where they lead a savage life, infinitely preferable to that of society corrupted by despotism. So great is this desertion, that, from the port of Mergui to Juthia the capital of the empire, one may travel for a week together, without meeting with the least sign of population, through an immense extent of country, well watered, the soil of which is excellent, and still bears the marks of former cultivation. This fine country is now over-run with tigers.

It was formerly inhabited by men. Beside the natives, it was full of settlements that had been successively formed there by the nations situated to the east of Asia. Their inducement was the immense trade carried on there. All historians attest, that in the beginning of the sixteenth century a great number of ships came into these roads every year. The tyranny which prevailed soon after, successively destroyed the mines, the manufactures, and agriculture. All the foreign merchants, and even those of the nation, were involved in the same ruin. The state fell into confusion, and consequently became languid. The

French, on their arrival, found it thus reduced. General poverty prevailed, and none of the arts were exercised ; while the people were under the dominion of a despotic tyrant, who, in attempting to monopolize all the trade, inevitably destroyed it. The few ornaments and articles of luxury that were consumed at court, and in the houses of the great, came from Japan. The Siamese held the Japanese in high estimation, and preferred their works to all others.

It was no easy matter to divert them from this attachment, and yet it was the only way of procuring a demand for the produce of French industry. If any thing could effect

Advantages which the French might have derived from Siam.

this change, it was the christian religion, which the priests of the foreign missions had preached to them, and not without success ; but the jesuits, too much devoted to Faulkon, who began to be odious, abused the favour they enjoyed at court, and drew upon themselves the hatred of the people. This odium was transferred from them to their religion. They built churches before there were any christians to frequent them. They founded monasteries, and by these proceedings occasioned the common people and the talapoys to revolt. The talapoys are the monks of the country ; some of whom lead a solitary life, and others are busy intriguing men. They preach to the people the doctrines and precepts of Sommona Kodom. That lawgiver of the Siamese was long honoured as a sage, and has since been revered as a god, or as an emanation of the deity, a son of God. A variety of marvellous stories are told of this man : he lived upon one grain of rice a-day : he pulled out one of his eyes to give to a poor man, having nothing else to bestow on him. Another time he gave away his wife. He commanded the stars, the rivers, and the mountains. But he had a brother, who frequently opposed his designs for the good of mankind. God avenged him, and crucified that unhappy brother. This fable had prejudiced the Siamese against the religion of a crucified God ; and they could not worship Jesus Christ, because he died the same death as the brother of Sommona Kodom.

If the French could not carry their commodities to Siam, they could at least gradually inspire the people with a taste for them, prepare the way for a great trade with this country, and avail themselves of that which actually offered, to open connections with all the East. The situation of that kingdom between two gulfs, where it extends one hundred and sixty leagues along the sea coast on the one gulf, and about two hundred on the other, would have opened the navigation of all the seas in that part of the world. The fortrefs of Bancoc, built at the mouth of the Menan, which had been put into the hands of the French, was an excellent mart for all transactions they might have had with China, the Philippines, or any of the eastern parts of India. Mergui, the principal port of the kingdom, and one of the best in Asia, which had likewise been ceded to them, would have greatly facilitated their trade with the coast of Coromandel, and chiefly with Bengal. It secured to them an advantageous intercourse with the kingdoms of Pegu, Ava, Arracan, and Lagos, countries still more barbarous than Siam, but where the finest rubies in the world, and some gold dust, are to be found. All these countries, as well as Siam, produce the tree which yields that valuable gum, with which the Chinese and Japanese make their varnish; and whoever is in possession of this commodity, may be certain of carrying on a very lucrative trade with China and Japan.

Beside the advantage of meeting with good settlements, which were no expence to the Company, and might throw into their hands a great part of the trade of the East, they might have brought home from Siam, ivory, logwood, like that which is cut in the bay of Campeachy, a great deal of cassia, and all the buffalo and deer skins that the Dutch formerly brought from thence. They might have grown pepper there, and, possibly, other spices which were not to be found in the country, as the people did not understand the culture of them, and because the wretched inhabitants of Siam are so indifferent to every thing, that nothing succeeds with them.

The French paid no regard to these objects. The factors of the Company, the officers, and the jesuits, were equally ignorant of trade: the whole attention of the latter was taken up in converting the natives, and

making themselves masters of them. At last, after having given but a weak assistance to Faulkon at the instant when he was ready to execute his designs, they were involved in his disgrace; and the fortresses of Mergui and Bancoc, defended by French troops, were taken from them by the most cowardly of all people.

DURING the short time that the French were settled at Siam, the company endeavoured to establish themselves at Tonquin. They flattered themselves that they might trade with safety and advantage with a nation which had for about seven centuries been instructed by the Chinese. Theism prevails among them, which is the religion of Confucius, whose precepts and writings are there holden in greater veneration than even in China. But there is not the same agreement as in China in the principles of government, religion, laws, opinions, rites, and ceremonies: and though Tonquin has the same law-giver, it is far from having the same system of morality. We find there neither that respect for parents, that love for the prince, those reciprocal affections, nor those social virtues which are met with in China, nor have they the same good order, police, industry, or activity.

This nation, which is devoted to excessive indolence, and is voluptuous without taste or delicacy, lives in constant distrust of its sovereigns and of strangers. It is doubtful whether this mistrust proceeds from a natural restlessness of temper, or whether their spirit of sedition be owing to this circumstance, that the Chinese system of morality has enlightened the people without improving the government. Whatever be the progress of knowledge, whether it come from the people to the government, or from that to the people, it is necessary that both should be enlightened at the same time, or else the state will be exposed to fatal revolutions. Accordingly, in Tonquin, there is a continual struggle between the eunuchs who govern, and the people who impatiently bear the yoke. Every thing languishes and tends to ruin in consequence of these dissensions; and the calamities must increase, till the people have compelled their masters to grow wiser, or the masters have rendered their subjects quite insens-

ible. The Portuguese and the Dutch, who had attempted to form some connections in Tonquin, had been forced to give them up. The French were not more successful. No Europeans have since carried on that trade, except some few merchants of Madras, who have alternately forsaken and resumed it. They divide with the Chinese the exportation of copper and ordinary silks, the only commodities of any value that country affords.

Cochin-China lay too near to Siam not to draw the attention of the French; and they would probably have fixed there, had they had sagacity enough to foresee what degree of splendour that rising state would one day acquire. The Europeans are indebted to a philosophical traveller for what little they know with certainty of that fine country. The following is the result of his observations:—

When the French arrived in those distant regions, they learned, that, about half a century before, a prince of Tonquin, as he fled from his sovereign, who pursued him as a rebel, had, with his soldiers and adherents, crossed the river, which serves as a barrier between Tonquin and Cochin-China. The fugitives, who were warlike and civilized people, soon expelled the scattered inhabitants, who wandered about without any society or form of government, or without any law, except that of mutual interest, which prompted them not to injure one another. Here they founded an empire upon the basis of agriculture and property. Rice was the food the most easily cultivated, and the most plentiful; upon this article, therefore, the new colonists bestowed their first attention. The sea and the rivers attracted a number of inhabitants to their borders, by the profusion of excellent fish they afforded. Domestic animals were bred in the country; some for food, others for labour. The inhabitants cultivated the trees they were most in want of, such as the cotton for their clothing. The mountains and forests, which could not be cultivated, afforded wild fowl, metals, gums, perfumes, and wood of an excellent kind. These productions served as so many materials, means, and objects, of commerce. One hundred galleys were built, which are constantly employed in defending the coasts of the kingdom.

All these several advantages of nature were well bestowed upon a people of a mild and humane disposition, which

they partly owe to their women : whether this influence they acquire be owing to their beauty, or whether it be the particular effect of their assiduity and of their skill in business, is not easy to determine : in general we observe, that in the first beginning of all societies, the women are sooner civilized than the men. Even their weakness, and their sedentary life, their being more taken up with various details, and with cares of a less important nature, furnish them sooner with that knowledge and experience, and incline them to those domestic attachments, which are the first promoters and strongest ties of society. This is, perhaps, the reason why, in many savage nations, the women are entrusted with the administration of civil government, which is but a higher degree of domestic economy. So long as the state is but as one great family, the women are capable of undertaking the management of it. Then, undoubtedly, the people are happiest, especially in a climate where nature has left but little for man to do.

Such is the climate of Cochin-China. Accordingly, the people, though but imperfectly civilized, enjoy that happiness which might excite the envy of more improved societies. They have neither robbers nor beggars. Every one is at liberty to live at his own house, or at his neighbour's. A traveller freely enters a house in any village, sits down to table, eats and drinks, without being invited or asked any questions, and then goes away without acknowledging the civility. He is a man, and therefore a friend and relation of the family. If he were a foreigner, he would excite more curiosity, but would be equally welcome.

These customs are the relics of the government of the first six kings of Cochin-China, and derived from the original contract entered into between the nation and their leader, before they crossed the river that divides Tonquin from Cochin-China. These men were weary of oppression. They dreaded the like calamity, and therefore took care to guard against the abuse of authority, which is so apt to transgress its due limits, if not kept under some restraint. Their chief, who had set them an example of liberty, and taught them to revolt, promised them that felicity which he himself chose to enjoy ; that of a just, mild, and parental government. He cultivated with them the land in

which they had all taken refuge. He never demanded any thing of them, except an annual and voluntary contribution, to enable him to defend the nation against the tyrant of Tonquin, who, for a long time, pursued them beyond the river which separated them from him.

This primitive contract was religiously observed for upwards of a century, under five or six successors of that brave deliverer : but at last it has been infringed. The reciprocal and solemn engagement between the king and his people is still renewed every year, in the face of heaven and earth, in a general assembly of the whole nation, collected in an open field, where the oldest man presides, and where the king only assists as a private person. He still honours and protects agriculture, but does not, like his predecessors, set the example of labour to his subjects. When he speaks of them, he still says, *they are my children* ; but they are no longer so. His courtiers have stiled themselves his slaves, and have given him the pompous and sacrilegious title of *king of heaven*. From that moment, men must have appeared to him but as so many insects creeping on the ground. The gold which he has taken out of the mines, has put a stop to agriculture. He has despised the homely roof of his ancestors, and would build a palace. Its circumference has been marked out, and is a league in extent. Thousands of cannon planted round the walls of this palace, make it formidable to the people. A despotic monarch resides there, who in a short time will be secluded from the eyes of the people ; and this concealment, which characterises the majesty of eastern kings, will substitute the tyrant to the father of the nation.

The discovery of gold has naturally brought on that of taxes ; and the administration of the finances will soon take place of civil legislation and social contract. Contributions are no longer voluntary, but extorted. Designing men go to the king's palace, and craftily obtain the privilege of plundering the provinces. With gold they at once purchase a right of committing crimes and the privilege of impunity ; they bribe the courtiers, elude the vigilance of the magistrates, and oppress the husbandman. The traveller already sees, as he passes along, fallow grounds, and whole villages forsaken by their inhabitants. This

king of heaven, like the gods of Epicurus, carelessly suffers plagues and calamities to vex the land. He is ignorant of the sufferings and distresses of his people, who will soon fall into a state of annihilation, like the savages whose territories they now possess. All nations governed by despotism must inevitably perish in this manner. If Cochin-China should relapse into that state of confusion out of which it emerged about a hundred and fifty years ago, it will be wholly disregarded by the navigators who now frequent the ports of that kingdom. The Chinese, who carry on the greatest trade there, get in exchange for their own commodities, wood for small work, and timber for building houses and ships.

They also export from thence an immense quantity of sugar, the raw at four livres [3s. 4d.] a hundred-weight, the white at eight [6s. 8d.] and sugar-candy at ten [8s. 4d.] very good silk, satins, and pitre, the fibres of a tree, not unlike the banana, which they fraudulently mix in their manufactures: black and ordinary tea, which serves for the consumption of common people; and such excellent cinnamon, that it sells three or four times dearer than that of Ceylon. There is but a small quantity of this, as it grows only upon one mountain, which is always surrounded with guards. Excellent pepper is another article, and such pure iron, that they work it as it comes out of the mine, without smelting: gold of three and twenty carrats, which is found there in greater plenty than in any other part of the East: aloes wood, which is more or less esteemed, as it is more or less resinous. The pieces that contain most of this resin are commonly taken from the heart, or from the root, of the tree. They are called *calunbac*, and are always sold for their weight in gold to the Chinese, who account them the highest cordial in nature. They are carefully preserved in pewter boxes, to keep them from drying. When they are to be administered, they are ground upon a marble, with such liquids as are best suited to the disorder they are intended to remove. The inferior kind of aloes wood, which always sells for a hundred livres [4l. 3s. 4d.] a pound at least, is carried to Persia, Turkey, and Arabia. They use it to perfume their clothes, and sometimes their apartments, upon very extraordinary occasions, and then they mix it with amber. It

is also employed for another purpose. A custom prevails among these nations, when they are desirous of shewing their visitors great marks of civility, to present them with pipes, then with coffee and sweetmeats. When conversation begins to grow languid, the sherbet is brought in, which is looked upon as a hint to depart. As soon as the stranger rises to go away, they bring in a little pan with aloes wood, and perfume his beard, sprinkling it with rose water.

Though the French, who had scarce any thing else to bring but cloth, lead, gunpowder, and brimstone, were obliged to trade with Cochin-China chiefly in money, yet they were under a necessity of pursuing this trade in competition with the Chinese. This inconvenience might have been obviated by the profit that would have been made upon goods sent to Europe, or sold in India; but it is now too late to attempt it. Probity and honesty, the essentials of an acting and lasting trade, are forsaking these regions, which were formerly so flourishing, in proportion as the government becomes arbitrary, and consequently unjust. In a short time no greater number of ships will be seen in their harbours than in those of the neighbouring states, where they were scarcely known.

However this may be, the French company, driven from Siam, and without hopes of settling at the extremities of Asia, began to regret their factory at Surat, where they dared not appear again, since they had left it without paying their debts. They had lost the only market they knew of for their cloths, their lead, and their iron; and they were continually at a loss in the purchase of goods to answer the capricious demands of the mother-country, and the wants of the colonies. By fulfilling all their former engagements, they might have recovered the privilege they had forfeited. The mogul government, which would have wished to see a greater number of ships resorting to Surat, often solicited the French to satisfy these claims, for they preferred them to the English, who had purchased of the court an exemption from all duties. Whether it were for want of honesty, of skill, or of means, certain it is that the company never could remove the reproach they had incurred. They confined their whole attention to the fortifying of Pondicherry, when they were suddenly

prevented by a bloody war, which had its origin in remote causes.

THE northern barbarians, who had overturned the Roman empire, that was mistress of the world, established a form of government which would not admit of augmenting their conquests, and kept every state within its natural limits.

The French lose and recover Pondicherry, their principal settlement.

The abolition of the feudal laws, and the alterations consequent upon it, seemed to tend a second time to establish a kind of universal monarchy; but the Austrian power, weakened by the great extent of its possessions, and their distance from each other, could not subvert the bulwarks that were raising against it. After a whole century passed in contests, hopes, and disappointments, it was forced to yield to a nation, whose strength, position, and activity, rendered her more formidable to the liberties of Europe. Richelieu and Mazarine began this revolution by their intrigues. Turenne and Condé completed it by their victories. Colbert settled it by the introduction of arts, and of all kinds of industry. If Lewis XIV, who may be said to have been, not perhaps the greatest monarch of his age, but one who best supported the dignity of the throne, had been more moderate in the exercise of his power, and the sense of his grandeur, it is difficult to determine how far he might have carried his good fortune. His vanity proved detrimental to his ambition. After bending his own subjects to his will, he wanted to exert the same power over his neighbours. His pride raised him more enemies than his influence and his genius could supply him with allies and resources. He was delighted with the flatteries of his panegyrists and courtiers, who promised him universal monarchy; and the pleasure he took in these adulations contributed still more than the extent of his power to inspire a dread of universal conquest and slavery. The distresses and invectives of his protestant subjects, dispersed by a tyrannical fanaticism, completed the hatred he had incurred by his successes, and by the abuse he had made of his prosperity.

The prince of Orange, a man of a steady, upright disposition, and of a penetrating judgment, endowed with every virtue that is consistent with ambition, became the

chief instigator of all these resentments, which he had long fomented by his negotiations and his emissaries. France was attacked by the most formidable confederacy recorded in history, and yet she was constantly, and in all parts, triumphant.

She was not so successful in Asia as in Europe. The Dutch first endeavoured to prevail upon the natives to attack Pondicherry, which they could never be compelled to restore. The Indian prince to whom they applied for that purpose, was not to be bribed to agree to so perfidious a proposal: his constant answer was, "the French have bought that place, it would be unjust to turn them out." What the raja refused to do, the Dutch did themselves: they besieged the town in 1693, and were obliged to restore it at the peace of Ryfwick, in a much better condition than they found it.

Martin was again appointed director, and managed the affairs of the company with that wisdom, skill, and integrity, which was expected from him. That able and virtuous merchant invited many new settlers to Pondicherry, and made the place agreeable to them, by the good order he maintained there, and by his moderation and justice. He acquired the favour of the neighbouring princes, whose friendship was of consequence to a weak and infant settlement. He chose or formed proper persons, whom he sent to the markets of Asia, and to the several princes of that empire. He had persuaded the French, that as they were come last to India, that as they found themselves there in a weak condition, and could not expect any assistance from their own country, they had no other way of succeeding, but by inspiring the natives with a favourable opinion of their character. He induced them to lay aside that levity, and those contemptuous airs, which so often make their nation insufferable to strangers. They grew modest, gentle, and attentive to business; they learned the art of behaving suitably to the genius of the several nations, and to particular circumstances. Those who did not confine themselves to the company's service, frequenting different courts, became acquainted with the places where the finest stuffs were manufactured, the staples where the choicest commodities were to be met with, and in short, with all the particulars relative to the inland trade of every country.

All that Martin had it in his power to accomplish, was to lay the foundation of future success to the company, by the good opinion he gave of the French, by the pains he took to train up agents, by the informations he gained, and by the good order he maintained in Pondicherry, which daily acquired new inhabitants; but all this was not sufficient to restore the declining state of the company, subject from its infancy to such disorders as must at length certainly destroy it.

His first plan was to establish a great empire at Madagascar. A single voyage carried over sixteen hundred and eighty-eight persons, who were made to expect a delightful climate and a rapid fortune, and found nothing but famine, discord, and death.

So unfortunate a beginning discouraged the adventurers from an undertaking, which they had entered upon merely with a view to follow the example of others, or in compliance with solicitations. The owners of shares had not made good their payments with so much punctuality as is required in commercial affairs. The government, which had engaged to advance, without interest, a fifth part of the sums the company were to receive, and which as yet was only bound to furnish two millions [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] again drew the same sum out of the public treasury, in hopes of supporting the work it had begun. Some time after, its generosity was carried still further, in making a free gift of what at first was only lent.

This encouragement from the ministry could not, however, enable the company to proceed in their designs. They were forced to confine them to Surat and Pondicherry; and to abandon their settlements at Bantam, Rajapore, Tileri, Mazulipatam, Gombroon, and Siam. No doubt they had too many factories, and some were ill situated; but the inability they were under of supporting them was the only reason that they were abandoned.

Soon after this, it became necessary to make further advances. In 1682, they gave permission indiscriminately to French subjects and foreigners to trade to the East Indies for five years, on the company's ships paying the

freight that should be agreed upon; and on condition that the goods brought home should be deposited in the company's warehouses, sold at the same time with theirs, and be subject to a duty of five per cent. The public so eagerly came into this proposal, that the directors entertained great hopes from the increase of these small profits, which would be constant without any risk. But the proprietors, less sensible of these moderate advantages, than jealous of the great profits made by the free traders, in two years time obtained a repeal of this regulation, and their charter remained in full force.

To support this monopoly with some decency, a fund was wanting. In 1684 the company obtained from government a call upon all the proprietors, amounting to a fourth part of their property; and in case any of them failed to pay the sum required, their whole share was to be made over to those who should pay it for them, after having reimbursed them a fourth of their capital. Whether from perverseness, from particular motives, or from inability, many did not pay, so that their shares lost three fourths of their original value; and, to the disgrace of the nation, there were men barbarous and unjust enough to enrich themselves with their spoils.

An expedient so dishonourable enabled them to fit out a few ships for Asia; but new wants were soon felt. Their cruel situation, which continually grew worse, put them upon demanding of the proprietors, in 1697, the restitution of the dividends of ten and twenty per cent. which they had received in 1687 and 1691. So extraordinary a proposal raised a general clamour. The company were obliged to have recourse to the usual method of borrowing. These loans became more burdensome, the more they were multiplied, as the security was more precarious.

As the company was in want both of money and credit, the emptiness of their coffers put it out of their power to afford those advantages, and that encouragement to the merchant in India, without which he will neither work nor set others to work. This inability reduced the French sales to nothing. It is demonstrable, that from 1664 to 1684, that is, in the space of twenty years, the

sum total of their produce did not exceed nine millions one hundred thousand livres [379,166l. 13s. 4d.]

To these had been added other abuses. The conduct of the administrators and agents for the company had not been properly directed, or carefully looked into. The capital had been broken into, and dividends paid out of the stock, which ought only to have arisen from the profits. The least brilliant and least prosperous of all reigns, had exhibited a model for a commercial company. The trade to China, the easiest, the safest, and the most advantageous that is carried on with Asia, had been given up to a particular body of merchants.

The bloody war of 1689, added to the calamities of the India company, even by the very successes of France. Swarms of privateers, fitted out from the several harbours in the kingdom, annoyed, by their vigilance and bravery, the trade of Holland and England. In their numberless prizes were found a prodigious quantity of India goods, which were retailed at a low price. The company, who by this competition were forced to sell under prime cost, endeavoured to find out some expedient to save themselves from this danger, but could think of none that was reconcilable with the interest of the privateers; nor did the minister think proper to sacrifice an useful set of men to a body which had so long wearied him with their necessities and complaints.

Beside these, the company had many more causes of discontent. The financiers had shewn an open hatred for them, and were continually opposing or confining them. Supported by those vile associates which they always have at court, they endeavoured to put an end to the Indian trade, under the specious pretence of encouraging the home manufactures. The government was at first afraid of being exposed to reproach, by departing from the principles of Colbert, and repealing the most solemn edicts; but the farmers of the revenue found means to render those privileges useless, which the ministry would not abolish, and the company no longer enjoyed, without being absolutely deprived of them.

Heavy duties were successively laid upon all India goods. Half a year seldom passed without some new regulation, sometimes to allow, sometimes to prohibit, the

use of these commodities : there was a continued scene of contradictions in a part of administration, that would have required steady and invariable principles. All these variations gave the Europeans reason to think, that trade would with difficulty be established in a kingdom where all depends upon the caprices of a minister, or the interest of those who govern.

The conduct of an ignorant and corrupt administration, the levity and impatience of the proprietors, the interested views of the comptrollers of finance, the oppressive spirit of the treasury, joined to other causes, had prepared the ruin of the company. The miseries of the war, carried on for the Spanish succession, hastened their destruction.

Every resource was exhausted. The most sanguine saw no prospect of their being able to send out a fleet. Besides, if, by unexpected good fortune, some few weak vessels should be fitted out, it was to be feared they might be seized in Europe, or in India, by disappointed creditors, who must necessarily be exasperated. These powerful motives determined the company, in 1707, to consent that some rich merchants should send their own ships to India, upon condition that they should allow the company fifteen per cent. profit upon the goods they should bring home, and the right of taking such share in those ships as their circumstances should admit of. Soon after this, they were even reduced to make over the whole and exclusive exercise of their privilege to some privateers of St. Malo, still reserving the same concession, which for some years past had in a certain degree kept them from ruin.

Notwithstanding this desperate situation, in 1714 they solicited the renewal of their charter, which was nearly expired, and which they had enjoyed for half a century. Although they had none of their capital left, and that their debts amounted to ten millions [416,666l. 13s. 4d.] yet the ministry, who did not know, or would not perceive, that measures more prudential might be adopted, granted them an indulgence for ten years longer. This new regulation was thwarted by the most incredible revolution that the finances of the kingdom ever experienced ; the cause and effects of which will be more readily comprehended by those who will take the trouble to follow

us in our review of the most distant periods of the monarchy.

We are entirely unacquainted with the manner in which the primitive Gauls supplied the several wants of the confederate bodies of which they were members. Their descendents, under the dominion of the Romans, paid no other tax than the fifth of the fruit of their trees, and the tenth of the produce of their harvests, in kind. *Revolutions in the finances of France from the earliest times.*

This impost was abolished at the invasion of the Franks, who did not substitute any other in lieu of it. The sovereign, for his private expences, as well as for the exigencies of the state, had no other revenue than that which he acquired from his lands, which were extensive and numerous. They were covered with woods, ponds, breeds of horses, cattle, and slaves, under the conduct of an active director, whose business it was to maintain order, to encourage industry, and to insure plenty. The court went to live successively upon these domains, which were entirely laid out in useful productions; and what they did not consume was sold for other purposes. The carriages wanted for the journeys of the prince, were furnished by the people, and the nobles supplied their sovereign with a residence and provisions. It was customary to make him a present of greater or less value at his departure; and this testimony of regard was afterwards changed into an impost, under the title of *droit de gîte* [tax of residence] when the heads of the state were disgusted of this wandering life. With these few resources, and some other succours, always of a trifling nature, which were granted (though very seldom) in the martial assemblies of the nation, the sovereign contrived still to build magnificent churches, to found rich bishoprics, to repel formidable enemies, and to make important conquests.

At the beginning of the eighth century, Charles Martel, the mayor of the palace, thought these funds insufficient for the defence of the kingdom, violently attacked by the Saracens, who were formidable from their numbers, their bravery, and their victories. It was the idea of this famous depositary of the royal authority, that a war against the infidels was to be maintained by holy pro-

perty ; and without any of those precautions which it has since been necessary to have recourse to, and which have even been frequently employed without effect, he seized upon the riches of the church, which were immense. If the clergy flattered themselves that peace would reinstate them in their possessions, they were disappointed in their expectations. The sovereigns remained masters of the richest bishoprics, the nobles of the best abbeys, and the gentlemen of the most considerable benefices. They became so many fiefs, the possessors, or rather perhaps the usurpers of which, were constrained to a military service proportioned to the value of their possessions. At first they were holden only for life ; but they afterwards became hereditary, upon the decline of Charlemagne's family. They were then introduced in the course of circulation, as all other properties are. They were given away, sold, or distributed. A living was frequently the dowry of a young person who used to farm the tenths, and the casual profits of it.

The first kings of the third race suffered themselves to be persuaded that it was a duty of religion, as well as a point of justice, to restore to the sanctuary what had been purloined from it. The sacrifice was so much the greater, as these princes could not expect any assistance from a nation that was parcelled out, and which held no more assemblies ; and as they had nothing remaining of their ancient domain, except what was situated in the circuit of the confined territory that had been left immediately at their own disposal, when the government became entirely feudal. The Jews were most commonly the persons who used to supply the deficiency which these revolutions had occasioned in the royal coffers.

Thirty-seven years after the death of the Messiah, Titus attacked and took Jerusalem. Thousands of Jews perished in the siege ; a great number were reduced to slavery, and the rest of the nation was dispersed. Some of them passed over into Gaul, where they experienced different treatment, according to times and circumstances.

Sometimes the Jews purchased the right of forming a distinct and separate people in the state. They had then their own tribunals, a seal that was peculiar to them, burying places without the gates of the cities, synagogues

in which they were allowed to pray only in a low voice, and a mark upon their clothes, which rendered it impossible not to know them.

If the intention sometimes prevailed of forcing them to turn christians, they were more frequently prohibited from it. A Jew who changed his religion, was subject to a penalty, and his estates were confiscated. He was thus deprived of every thing, because there was no longer any pretence for loading him with taxes.

Most commonly, the nation was left a prey to the usurious dealings of these iniquitous men : but on some occasions it was forbidden to hold any intercourse with them. It was prohibited by law to hire any Jews for servants, to hold any lease of them, to put any trust in their physicians, to suckle, or even to rear their children.

They were often accused of having poisoned the wells, of having massacred the children, and of having crucified a man on the memorable day of Good-Friday. It was by gold alone that they were able to clear themselves of all these atrocious imputations, equally devoid of truth and probability.

The spirit of tyranny often loaded them with chains. Their persons, their estates, and their goods, all belonged to the lord of the place where they dwelt. He might pursue them if they changed their residence, and the sovereign himself had no right to detain them whenever they were claimed. These kinds of slaves were considered as an article of trade ; they were sold, either separately, or with the land, at a greater or less price, according to their respective talents and industry.

In some instances they were compelled to purchase their freedom. These low-minded men would have preferred a state of slavery which did not prevent them from acquiring riches, to an independence by which they were to be deprived of them ; but the liberty of choice was not allowed to them. They were forced to submit, either to expire in torments, or to drag from the bowels of the earth the treasures they had concealed there.

When these insatiable leeches had devoured the substance of the whole state, they were made to disgorge their plunder, and then exiled. In order to get leave to renew their depredations, they sacrificed part of the trea-

ture they had saved from the general wreck, and made use of the rest in regaining still more than had been taken from them.

Though the barons had more or less a share in the vexations with which the Jews were oppressed, yet the sovereigns, upon whom this perverse race more particularly depended, always derived the principal advantages from them. It was by means of this fatal and odious resource that they supported for some time a feeble and contended authority. In after-times, the debasing of the coin furnished them with fresh assistance.

The ancient governments were very far from making any advantage of their coin. The coinage was always carried on at the expence of the state ; and it is a matter of uncertainty which were the people who first laid a tax upon this universal object of exchange. If this fatal example was given by France, the kings of the first and second race must have derived little advantage from this pernicious innovation ; because the payments were made, as among the Romans, with metals given by the weight ; and because the use of specie was adopted only in the details of commerce. This custom became afterwards considerably less prevalent ; and the sovereigns were still more inclined to increase a tax, which was every day becoming more advantageous to them. In a little time they went much further, and did not scruple to commit the most flagrant act of dishonesty, in altering the value of the coin, at pleasure, or according to their necessities. The specie was continually undergoing a fresh melting, and was always mixed with very base alloy.

It was with these odious succours ; with the revenue of a territory extremely limited ; with some fiefs, which either became vacant or were confiscated ; with some voluntary offerings, which were therefore styled gifts of benevolence ; with some taxes exacted from the barons, but which were rather tokens of submission than real imposts ; it was, in a word, by these means, that the crown was supported, and that its power even continued increasing, during all the time that it had no other enemies to contend with, except vassals more feeble than itself. Wars at that period lasted no longer than a few weeks ; the armies were not numerous ; the military service was performed without

reward ; and the expences of the court were so inconsiderable, that, till the fatal reign of Charles VI, they never exceeded 94,000 livres [3,916l. 13s. 4d.]

But no sooner had the epidemic rage of the crusades drawn the French far away from their frontiers ; no sooner had foreign enemies made powerful inroads into France, than it became necessary to establish regular and considerable funds. The sovereigns would have been very desirous of taking upon themselves the regulation of these contributions ; and attempted it more than once. They were forewarned of these usurpations by the remonstrances of enlightened persons, and compelled to give them up by the revolt of the people. They were obliged to acknowledge that this authority belonged to the nation assembled, and to that alone. They even made oath at their coronation, that this sacred and unalienable right should be for ever respected ; and this oath was a restraint upon them for several centuries.

During all the time that the crown had no other revenue than the produce of its domains, the collecting of the public treasury had been allotted to the seneschals and bailiffs, each in their respective departments ; so that power, the administration of justice, and the distribution of finance, were all united under one common head. When taxes were general throughout the kingdom, it became necessary to settle a new arrangement of matters. Whether these taxes bore upon the person, or upon the houses, of the citizens ; whether individuals were required to give up the fifth or the tenth of their harvests, and the fiftieth or the hundredth parts of their effects, moveable or immoveable ; or whether other calculations, more or less fortunate, were made,—still there was a necessity to have a multiplicity of agents to collect these different tributes ; and, unfortunately for the state, these agents were sought for in Italy, where the art of squeezing the people had already made an immense progress.

These financiers, who were known by the name of Lombards, gave early proofs of a genius fertile in fraudulent contrivances. Numberless and fruitless attempts were made, at different times, to put a stop to their insatiable cupidity. No sooner was one abuse suppressed, than it was succeeded by another of a different kind. If these in-

famous plunderers were sometimes prosecuted with rigour by the hand of authority, they found an effectual support from some powerful persons, whose protection and influence they had purchased. At length, however, their enormities were carried to such a height, that no protection could save them. The advances which these pernicious strangers had made to government and to individuals, were confiscated; they were deprived of the immense treasures they had heaped up, and were banished from the kingdom, into which they ought never to have been admitted. After their expulsion, the general assembly of the states, which regulated the subsidies, took upon themselves to collect them; and this arrangement continued till the time of Charles VII, who first ventured to settle a tax without the consent of the nation, and who appropriated to himself the right of having all the imposts collected by his own delegates.

Under the reign of Lewis XII the public revenue, which had gradually increased, amounted to seven millions six hundred and fifty thousand livres [318,750*l.*] The marc of silver was then valued at eleven livres [9*s.* 2*d.*] and the marc of gold at one hundred and thirty [51. 8*s.* 4*d.*] This sum answered to thirty-six millions of our livres [1,500,000*l.*] at this day.

At the death of Francis I, the treasury received fifteen millions seven hundred and thirty thousand livres [655,416*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] the marc of silver being then valued at fifteen livres [12*s.* 6*d.*] and the marc of gold at one hundred and sixty-five [61. 17*s.* 6*d.*] this answered to fifty-six millions of our livres [2,333,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] From this sum, sixty thousand four hundred and sixteen livres three sols four deniers [2,517*l.* 6*s.* 8½*d.*] were to be deducted for the perpetual annuities created by that prince, and which, at eight and a half per cent. answered to a capital of seven hundred and twenty-five thousand livres [30,208*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] This was an innovation; not but that some of his predecessors had been acquainted with the fatal resource of loans; but this had been always upon the security of their agents, and the state had never been concerned in them.

A series of civil wars, of acts of fanaticism, of depredations, of crimes, and of anarchy, during a space of

forty years, plunged the finances of the kingdom into a state of disorder, from which none but a Sully could have recovered them. This economical, enlightened, virtuous, indefatigable, and bold minister, reduced to the amount of seven millions [291,666l. 13s. 4d.] of annuities, lessened the taxes by three millions [125,000l.] and left the state twenty-six millions [1,083,333l. 6s. 8d.] with the burden only of six millions twenty-five thousand six hundred and sixty-six livres two sols six deniers [about 251,069l. 8s. 5d.] in annuities; consequently, when all charges were deducted, twenty millions of livres [833,333l. 6s. 8d.] entered the royal treasury; fifteen millions five hundred thousand [645,833l. 6s. 8d.] were sufficient for the public expences, and the savings amounted to four millions five hundred thousand livres [187,500l.] The value of silver was then twenty-two livres [18s. 4d.] the marc.

The compelled retreat of this great man, after the tragical end of the best of kings, was a calamity which we still have cause to regret. The court immediately indulged itself in profusions which were unparalleled in the monarchy; and the ministers afterwards formed enterprises, to which the powers of the nation were not adequate. The treasury was again exhausted by this double principle of unavoidable confusion. In 1661, the taxes amounted to eighty-four millions two hundred and twenty-two thousand and ninety-six livres [3,509,254l.] but the debts absorbed fifty-two millions three hundred and seventy-seven thousand one hundred and seventy-two livres [2,182,382l. 3s. 4d.] There remained, therefore, for the public expences, no more than thirty-one millions eight hundred and forty-four thousand nine hundred and twenty-four livres [1,326,871l. 16s. 8d.] a sum evidently insufficient for the exigencies of the state. Such was the situation of the finances, when the administration of them was intrusted to Colbert.

This minister, whose name is become so celebrated among all nations, raised, in 1683, which was the last year of his life, the revenues of the monarch whom he served, to one hundred and sixteen millions eight hundred and seventy-three thousand four hundred and seventy-six livres [4,869,728l. 3s. 4d.] The sum charged upon it

did not exceed twenty-three millions three hundred and seventy-five thousand two hundred and seventy-four livres [973,969l. 15s.] so that the sum of ninety-three millions four hundred and ninety-eight thousand two hundred and two livres [3,895,758l. 8s. 4d.] was consequently poured into the king's coffers. The value of silver was then twenty-eight livres ten sols ten deniers [1l. 3s. 9½d.] the marc. We have only to regret, that the fatal propensity of Lewis XIV for war, and his inordinate turn for every kind of expence that was attended with parade and magnificence, should have deprived the kingdom of France of some of the advantages she might have flattered herself with from so able an administrator.

After the death of Colbert, the affairs were plunged again into that chaos, from which his industry and talents had made them emerge. Though France appeared with some degree of outward splendour, yet her internal decay was daily increasing. Her finances, administered without order or principle, fell a prey to a multitude of contractors; who made themselves necessary even by their plunders, and went so far as to impose terms to government. Confusion, usury, continual alterations of the coin, reductions of interest, alienations of the domain and of the taxes, engagements which it was impossible to fulfil, creations of pensions and places, privileges and exemptions of all kinds: these, and a variety of other evils, each more ruinous than the other, were the deplorable and unavoidable consequence of an almost uninterrupted succession of vicious administrations.

The loss of credit soon became universal. Bankruptcies were more frequent. Money grew scarce, and trade was at a stand. The consumption was less. The culture of lands was neglected. Artists went over to foreign countries. The common people had neither food nor clothing. The nobility served in the army without pay, and mortgaged their lands. All orders of men groaned under the weight of taxes, and were in want of the necessities of life. The royal effects had lost their value. The contracts upon the *hotel de ville* sold but for half their worth, and bills of an inferior kind lost infinitely more. Lewis XIV, a little before his death, was in great want of eight millions [333,333l. 6s. 8d.] and was forced

to give bonds for thirty-two millions [1,333,333l. 6s. 8d.] which was borrowing at four hundred per cent.

No clamours were raised against so enormous an usury. The revenue of the state amounted, it is true, to one hundred and fifteen millions three hundred eighty-nine thousand and seventy-four livres [4,807,878l. 1s. 8d.] but the sums charged upon it took away eighty-two millions eight hundred and fifty-nine thousand five hundred and four livres [3,452,479l. 6s. 8d.] so that there remained, for the expences of government, no more than thirty-two millions five hundred and twenty-nine thousand five hundred and seventy livres [1,355,398l. 15s.] at thirty livres ten sols six deniers about [1l. 5s. 5d.] the marc. All these funds were, moreover, anticipated for upwards of three years.

Such was the confusion in the state of public affairs, when, on the first of September 1715, the duke of Orleans assumed the reins of government. The true friends of this great prince were desirous that he should call together a general assembly of the states. This would have been an infallible method of preserving, and even of increasing, the public favour, already openly declared for him. Whatever measures might have been adopted by the nation, to free itself from that critical situation into which it had been precipitated by the dissipations of the preceding reign, no blame could have been imputed to him. The duke of Orleans was ready to concur in this expedient. Unfortunately, the perfidious confidants, who had usurped too much power over his mind, reprobated a scheme in which their private interest could not find its advantage; and it was given up.

At that time, some great men, disgusted of the despotism under which France was oppressed, and seeing no probability of shaking off the yoke, entertained an idea of a complete bankruptcy, which they thought a proper method of moderating the excess of absolute power. The manner in which they conceived that it should be brought about, was singular.

According to their system, the crown is neither hereditary nor elective. It is nothing more than a trust granted by the whole nation to one particular house, that it may pass from one elder male to the next, as long as the

family shall exist. Upon this principle, a king of France holds nothing from the person whom he succeeds. He comes to the throne in his turn, in virtue of the right which his birth gives him, and not as the representative of his father. He cannot, therefore, be bound by the engagements of his predecessors. The primordial law which gives him the sceptre, requires that the substitution should be simple, complete, and free from any obligation.

These bold men were desirous that these maxims, which appeared to them incontrovertible, as well as the decisive consequences they drew from them, should be consecrated in the eyes of all Europe by a most solemn edict. They thought, that when these truths were made known, they would prevent foreigners and natives from lending their capitals to a government which could give no solid security for the debt. Consequently, the court would from that time be reduced to live upon its own income. However considerable this income might be, the necessary consequence of such an event would be, that some limit would be set to the caprices of the sovereigns; that the expensive enterprises of ministers would become of less continuance and frequency; and that the insatiable cupidity of favourites and mistresses must in some measure be restrained.

Some politicians, without adopting a system, which appeared to them calculated to lead their princes to tyranny, were of opinion, that the crown should be released of its debts, in whatever mode they might have been contracted. They could not bear the distressing sight of an amiable people, exasperated by extortions of all kinds, which they had been exposed to during a course of forty years; a people who were sinking under the enormous weight of their present misery; and who were in the utmost despair at foreseeing that time, that great resource of the wretched, would bring no relief to their distresses, but would probably aggravate them. The creditors of the state, who did not constitute a thousandth part of the citizens, who were most of them known only by their depredations, and the most upright of whom acquired from the public treasury the affluence they enjoyed, appeared objects less interesting to these politicians. In the grievous necessity

of sacrificing one part of the nation to the other, it was their opinion that the lenders should be the victims.

The regent, after some deliberations, refused to adopt so violent a measure, which he thought would inevitably fix an indelible stain upon his administration. He chose rather to institute a strict inquiry into the public engagements, than to submit to a disgraceful bankruptcy, the publicity of which he thought might be avoided.

An office for the revision of accounts, established on the 7th of December 1715, reduced six hundred millions [25,000,000*l.*] of stock payable to bearer, to two hundred and fifty millions [10,416,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] in government bonds; and yet the national debt, after this operation, amounted still to two thousand and sixty-two millions one hundred and thirty-eight thousand and one livres [85,822,416*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*]

This enormous debt suggested the idea of appointing, in the month of March 1716, a bed of justice, to call those to account who had been the authors of the public calamities, or who had profited by them. This inquiry served only to expose to public view the incapacity of the ministers who had been intrusted with the management of the finances, the craft of the farmers of the revenue who had swallowed them up, and the baseness of the courtiers, who had sold their interest to the first bidder. By this experiment, honest minds were confirmed in the abhorrence they always had entertained for such a tribunal. It degrades the dignity of the prince who fails to fulfil his engagements, and exposes to the people, the vices of a corrupt administration. It is injurious to the rights of the citizen, who is accountable for his actions to none but the law. It strikes terror into the rich, who are marked out as delinquents, merely because they are rich, be their fortunes well or ill gotten. It gives encouragement to informers, who point out as fit objects for tyranny such as it may be advantageous to ruin. It is composed of unmerciful leeches, who see guilt wherever they suspect there is wealth. It spares plunderers, who know how to screen themselves by a seasonable sacrifice of part of their riches, and spoils honest men who think themselves secure in their innocence. It sacrifices the interests of the treasury to the

caprices of a few greedy, profligate, and extravagant favourites.

All the springs of the state were destroyed, before this resource, which bore evident marks of the passions and prejudice, had been experienced. The situation of the body politic became still more desperate, after this convulsive effort. The members of the state lost the little they had left of energy and life; so that it became necessary to re-animate the corpse. This resurrection was not an impossible thing, because there was a general disposition prevailing to make use of any remedies that were proposed; the difficulty was to propose none but such as would be effectual: the celebrated Law made the attempt.

Methods contrived by Law, to recover the finances of France. Part taken by the company in the execution of his projects.

THIS Scotchman was one of those projectors, or state empirics, who are constantly roaming about the courts of Europe, displaying their talents, and hurried on by a restless disposition. He was a deep calculator; and at the same time, which appears rather inconsistent, endowed with a most lively and ardent imagination. His turn of mind and character proved agreeable to the regent, over whose understanding he soon gained an influence. Law engaged himself that he would re-establish the finances of the kingdom, and easily prevailed upon that prince, who was a man of dissipation and genius, to countenance a plan which promised him wealth and reputation. We shall now give an account of the series and result of his operations.

First, he was allowed, in the month of May 1716, to establish a bank at Paris, the capital of which was to consist of six millions of livres [250,000*l.*] to be formed by twelve hundred shares, of three thousand livres [125*l.*] each.

This bank was not permitted to make any loan. It was prohibited from entering into any kind of trade, and its engagements were to be at sight. Every native, and every foreigner, might place their money in it; and it engaged to make all the payments, for the deduction of five sols [2½*d.*] upon every three thousand livres [125*l.*] The bills, which it gave out at a very mo-

derate discount, were paid in all the provinces by the directors of the mint, who were its agents, and who, on their part, drew upon its treasury. Its paper was equally received in all the principal places in Europe, at the ordinary course of exchange, at the time it became due.

The success of this new establishment confounded the opponents of its founder, and, perhaps, went beyond his own expectations. Its influence was felt even from the first. A rapid circulation of money, which had so long remained inactive, from the general mistrust that prevailed, soon brought every thing into motion again. Agriculture, manufactures, and the arts, were revived. All articles of consumption resumed their former course. The merchants, finding their bills of exchange discounted at five per cent. and getting securities for them which were as good as specie, renewed their speculations. Usury was put a stop to, because persons of property found themselves compelled to lend their money at the same interest as the bank did. When foreigners were able to rely upon the nature of the payments they might have to make, they made fresh demands for productions, from the purchasing of which they did not abstain without regret. To the great astonishment of all nations, the exchange rose to the advantage of France.

This was a considerable step; but it was not doing all that was possible or necessary. In the month of March 1717, it was decreed, that the bills of the bank should be received at all the offices in payment of the taxes, and that they should be paid at sight, and without discount, by those who were entrusted with the management of the public money. By this important regulation, the produce of the taxes was detained in the provinces, the expence attending the carriage of money was saved both to the sovereign and to the public, and the numerous as well as useless circulations it underwent, through the hands of a multiplicity of agents, were avoided. This operation, which carried the credit of the bank to the highest pitch, was equally useful to the government. The imposts were now collected, not only without those acts of violence, which for so long a time past had raised clamours against the administration and urged the people to acts of desperation, but also the public revenues were continually and

rapidly increased, in a manner which could not fail to bring about a fortunate change in the situation of government.

The unexpected appearance of so many advantages, made Law be considered as a man of judgment, of extensive and elevated genius, who despised riches, and was ambitious of fame, and who wished to transmit his name to posterity by great acts. The gratitude of the people rose so high, that he was thought worthy of the most honourable and public monuments. This bold and enterprising foreigner availed himself of a disposition so favourable to him, in hastening the execution of a project which had for a long time engaged his attention.

In the month of August 1717, he obtained permission to establish the Western company, the rights of which were at first confined to the exclusive trade of Louisiana, and of the beavers of Canada. The privileges formerly granted for the trade to Africa, to the East Indies, and to China, were soon incorporated with those of the new establishment. These companies, thus united, projected the paying off of the national debt. In order to put them in a condition to accomplish so great a design, government granted them the sale of tobacco, the coinage, the excise duties, and the farms general.

In order to hasten the revolution, Law obtained, on the 4th of December 1718, that the bank which he had established two years before, and which, while its interests were distinct from those of the state, had been of so great utility, should be erected into a royal bank. Its bills passed as current coin between individuals, and they were taken in payment at all the royal treasuries.

The first operations of the new system gave universal satisfaction. The shares of the company, most of them bought with government bills, and which, upon an average, did not really cost five hundred livres [20l. 16s. 8d.] rose to the value of ten thousand livres [416l. 13s. 4d.] payable in bank bills. Such was the general infatuation, that not only natives, but foreigners, and men of the best understanding, sold their stock, their lands, and their jewels, in order to play at this extraordinary game. Gold and silver were in no kind of estimation; nothing but paper currency was fought after.

It was not, perhaps, impossible, but that this enthusiasm might have been kept up for a sufficient length of time, to have been productive of some advantage, if Law's views had been implicitly followed. This calculator, notwithstanding the boldness of his principles, was desirous of limiting the number of shares, although he never could have been compelled to reimburse them. But he was more particularly determined not to distribute bank bills to the amount of more than ten or twelve hundred millions of livres [from 41,666,666l. 13s. 4d. to 50,000,000l.] This was supposed to be the value of the specie circulating in the kingdom; and he flattered himself, that by these operations, he should collect in the king's coffers a sufficient quantity of it, to enable him to pay off any persons who might be desirous of changing their paper currency into money. A plan which in itself was so little likely to succeed, was still further disconcerted by the conduct of the regent.

This prince had received from nature a quick and penetrating spirit, an uncommon share of memory, and a sound understanding. He acquired by study a manly degree of eloquence, an exquisite discernment, a taste for the fine arts, and a proficiency in them. In war, he displayed much valour; and in the management of civil affairs, great dexterity and frankness. His character, and the circumstances of the times, contributed to place him in some delicate situations, by which he gained a complete knowledge of mankind, and an early experience. The kind of disgrace in which he had lived for a long time, had given him social manners, so that he was easy of access; and in any intercourse with him, no man had reason to fear the being treated with ill humour or with haughtiness. His conversation was insinuating, and his manners perfectly graceful. He was of a benevolent disposition, or at least assumed the appearance of it.

These amiable and estimable qualities did not produce the great effects that were expected from them. The want of firmness in Philip rendered all these advantages useless to the nation. He had never strength of mind sufficient to refuse any thing to his friends, to his enemies, to his mistresses, and especially to his favourite Dubois, the most corrupt and profligate of men. This inability

of refusing manifested itself particularly at the time of the system. In order to glut the cupidity of all those who had the impudence to say, or to think that they were useful, he created six hundred and twenty-four thousand shares, the value of which rose to above six thousand millions of livres, [250,000,000*l.*] and gave out bank bills to to the amount of 2696,400,000 livres [112,350,000*l.*]

A disproportion so enormous, between the paper currency and the coin, might possibly have been supported in a free nation, where it had been brought on by degrees. The citizens, accustomed to consider the nation as a permanent and independent body, trust to its security, the more readily, as they are seldom thoroughly acquainted with its powers, and have a good opinion of its equity, founded on experience. Upon the strength of this favourable prejudice, credit is often stretched in those states beyond the real resources and securities of the nation. This is not the case in absolute monarchies, especially such as have often broken their engagements. If in times of public infatuation an implicit confidence be shewn, it is but for a little while. Their insolvency becomes evident. The honesty of the monarch, the mortgage, the stock, every thing appears imaginary. The creditor, recovered from his delirium, demands his money, with a degree of impatience proportionable to his uneasiness. The history of the system corroborates this truth.

The desire of putting off those, who, first recovered from the general phrenzy, were wishing to convert their paper into money, made it necessary to have recourse to expedients, such as could only have been suggested by the most inveterate opposer of the system. Gold was prohibited in trade. All the citizens were forbidden to keep by them more than five hundred livres [2*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*] in specie. Several successive diminutions in the value of the coin were declared by edict. These tyrannical proceedings not only put a stop to the demands, but likewise reduced some timid persons to the cruel necessity of throwing more stock into the bank. But this temporary success did not even conceal the precipice that had been so imprudently opened.

In order to prop up an edifice which was tumbling to

pieces on all sides, it was decreed, that the standard for the coin should be raised to eighty-two livres ten sols [2l. 8s. 9d.] the marc; that the bank bills should be reduced to half of their value, and the shares to five-ninths. This mode of reducing the disproportion between the paper currency and the coin, was, perhaps, the least unreasonable that could have been adopted in the desperate situation of affairs at that time; it completed, however, the general confusion. The consternation became universal: every man thought he had lost the half of his fortune, and hastened to call in the remainder. The coffers were empty, and the stock-holders found they had been deluded by mere chimeras. Then it was that Law disappeared, and with him the expectation, absurdly entertained, of obtaining the restoration of the public finances, through his means. Every thing fell into confusion.

It did not seem possible to clear up this chaos. In order to attempt it, on the 26th of January 1721, an office was created, into which the life annuities, and perpetual annuities, the shares, the bank bills, in a word, all papers bearing the mark of the royal authority of whatever kind, were to be deposited in the course of two months, and their validity was afterwards to be discussed.

It was found by this examination, so celebrated under the title of *Vifa*, that bank bills had been circulated to the amount of 2696,400,000 livres [112,350,000l.] The value of 707,327,460 livres [29,471,977l. 10s.] of these was burnt, and not reckoned in the liquidation. The stock-holders were condemned to a restitution of 187,893,661 livres [7,808,912l. 10s. 10d.] and other modes were contrived to diminish the national debt. The political machine began now to resume its motions; but they were neither easy, nor even regular.

In whatever manner the finances of the kingdom were afterwards administered, they were never adequate to the expences. This is a distressing fact, the demonstration of which we have before our eyes. In vain were taxes multiplied; wants, fancies, and depredations, were still increased beyond them; and the treasury became more and more in debt. At the death of Lewis XV the public revenues rose to 375,331,874 livres 15,638,823l. 1s. 8d.] But the engagements, notwith-

standing the multitude of bankruptcies that had been made, amounted to 190,858,531 livres [7,952,438l. 15s. 10d.] There remained, therefore, no more than 184,473,343 livres [7,686,389l. 5s. 10d.] the expences of the state required 210,000,000 livres [8,750,000l. consequently there was a deficiency of 25,526,657 livres [1,063,610l. 13s. 4d.] in the treasury.

The public suppose, that a better use will be made of the revenue under the present reign. Their expectations are founded upon the love of order, the contempt of pomp, the spirit of justice, and those other plain and modest virtues, which seemed to crowd about the throne when Lewis XVI ascended it.

Young prince ! thou who hast been able to preserve an abhorrence of vice and dissipation in the midst of the most dissolute of courts, and under the weakest of preceptors, condescend to hear me with indulgence, because I am an honest man, and one of thy best subjects ; because I have no pretensions to thy favour, and that every morning and evening I lift up my hands to heaven, praying for the good of mankind, and for the prosperity and glory of thy reign. The boldness with which I shall venture to tell thee truths that thy predecessor never heard from the mouths of his flatterers, and which thou wilt not be more likely to hear from those who approach thee, is the best eulogium I can make of thy character.

Thou reignest over the finest empire in the universe. Notwithstanding the decline into which it has fallen, there is no place upon the earth where the arts and sciences sustain themselves with so much lustre. The neighbouring nations are in want of thy assistance, while thou canst maintain thyself without theirs. If thy provinces were to enjoy all the fertility of which they are susceptible ; if thy troops, without being much more numerous, were as well disciplined as they could be ; if thy revenues, without being increased, were more faithfully administered ; if a spirit of economy directed the expences of thy ministers, and of thy palace ; if thy debts were paid off : what power on earth would be so formidable as thine ?

Say, where is the monarch who rules over subjects so patient, so faithful, and so affectionate ? Is there a people more frank, more active, or more industrious ? Has

not all Europe derived from them that social spirit which so happily distinguishes the present period from all preceding ages? Have not statesmen of all countries pronounced thy empire to be inexhaustable? Thou thyself wilt even be sensible of the whole extent of these resources, if thou sayest to thyself without delay: "I am young, but my only wish is to do good. Firmness gets the better of all obstacles. Let me only be presented with a true picture of my situation: whatever it may be, I shall not be alarmed." Prince, thou hast commanded, and I hasten to obey. If, while I am speaking, one tear does but steal from thine eyes, our preservation is at hand.

When an unexpected event placed the sceptre in thine unexperienced hands, the French navy for one moment, one single awful moment, had ceased to exist. Weakness, disorder, and corruption, had replunged it into that state of annihilation, from which it had emerged at the most brilliant era of the monarchy. It had neither been able to defend our distant possessions, nor to preserve our coasts from invasion and plunder. In all the regions of the globe, our seamen and our merchants were exposed to ruinous oppressions, and to mortifications infinitely more intolerable.

The forces and treasure of the nation had been lavished for interests, foreign, and perhaps repugnant to our own. But what is gold, or what is blood, in comparison of honour? Our arms, formerly so much dreaded, inspired no more any kind of terror. We were scarce allowed to have courage.

Our ambassadors, who for so long a time had appeared in foreign courts less to negotiate, than to manifest the intentions, I had almost said the will of their masters; our ambassadors were now despised. The most important transactions were concluded without any communication with them. Powers in alliance with us, divided empires amongst themselves without our knowledge. Was it possible to declare in a more insulting, and less equivocal manner, the little weight we were considered to have in the general balance of the political affairs of Europe? What was become of the dignity and respect of the French name?

Such is, young sovereign thy situation, without the limits of thine empire. Thou dost cast down thine eyes, and darest not look at it. The internal view of thy kingdom will not afford thee a more comfortable prospect.

In proof of this, I call to witness that succession of bankruptcies which have happened from year to year, from month to month, under the reign of thy predecessor. Thus it is, that the utmost degree of indigence hath insensibly been brought on a multitude of subjects, who had incurred no other reproach, than that of having indiscreetly trusted their fortune to their sovereigns, and of having overrated the estimation of their sacred promise. We should be ashamed of a breach of faith, even with an enemy; and kings, the fathers of their country, are not ashamed to break their words in this cruel and base manner with their children! Abominable prostitution of their oaths. It might still be some kind of consolation to these unfortunate persons if they had fallen victims to the necessity of circumstances, or to the urgency of the public wants, which are ever renewed: but these acts of perfidy have been executed after years of a long peace, without their appearing any other motive for them, than the abandoning of the plunder of the public finances, to a multitude of persons as vile as they were rapacious. Behold the chain of them, descending from the upper steps of the throne, and extending from thence to the lowest ranks of society. Behold what is the consequence, when the monarch separates his interests from those of his people.

Cast thine eyes upon the capital of thine empire, and thou wilt find in it two orders of citizens. The first, gorged with riches, display a luxury which raises the indignation of those whom it does not seduce; the others are oppressed with indigence, which they increase by assuming the appearance of affluence that does not belong to them: for such is the power of gold, when it is become the idol of a nation, that is a substitute for every talent and for every virtue; insomuch that a man must either have riches, or make it be thought that he has. Among this heap of dissolute men, thou wilt see some laborious, honest, economical, and industrious citizens,

half proscribed by the erroneous laws, which the spirit of intoleration hath dictated, deprived of all public functions, and always ready to quit their country, because they are not allowed to take root by the acquisition of property in a state where they exist, without civil honour, and without security.

Turn thy view towards the provinces, where every species of industry is upon the decline. Thou wilt see them sinking under the load of taxes, and under the oppressions, as diversified as they are cruel, of the numberless satellites attending on the contractors.

After this, take a review of the country, and behold if thou canst, with an unweeping eye, the man who enriches us condemned to perish with misery; the unfortunate farmer, who scarce retains from the lands that he has cultivated a sufficient quantity of straw to cover his hut and make himself a bed. Behold the protected extortioner, roaming about his poor habitation, in hopes of finding, in the appearance of some little improvement in his wretched situation, the pretence of redoubling his extortions. Behold multitudes of men who have no possessions, quitting from the earliest dawn, their dwelling, with their wives, their children, and their cattle, in order to proceed without wages, and without food, to the making of roads, the advantage of which is entirely on those who engross all possessions.

I perceive that thy feeling heart is overwhelmed with grief; and thou dost ask with a sigh, what is the remedy to such a variety of evils? Thou shalt be told it; thou shalt tell it to thyself. But thou must first be informed that the monarch, who hath none but pacific virtues, may secure the affection of his subjects; and that there is nothing, except fortitude, which can make him respected by his neighbours; thou must be informed, that kings have no relations, and that family compacts last no longer than the contracting parties find their interest in them; that there is still less confidence to be reposed in thy alliance with an artful house, which requires a strict observation of the treaties made with it, without ever being at a loss for a pretence to elude the conditions of them, when they stand in the way of its own aggrandizement; thou must be informed, that a king, the only man who knows not

whether he has a true friend near him, cannot possibly have one out of his dominions, and must therefore rely only upon himself; that an empire can no more subsist without morals, and without virtue, than a private family; that it hastens on in the same manner to its ruin by dissipation, and is equally unable of recovering itself without economy; thou must be informed, that pomp adds nothing to the majesty of the throne; that one of thy ancestors never appeared more great than when attended by a few guards, which he had even no occasion for, more plainly clothed than any one of his subjects, and with his back resting against an oak, he heard all complaints that were addressed to him, and determined every dispute; thou must be informed, in a word, that thy kingdom will recover from the abysses digged by thy predecessors, if thou wilt take upon thyself to regulate thy conduct, upon the model of that of a rich individual, loaded with debt, and yet honest enough to be desirous of answering the inconsiderate engagements of his ancestors, and just enough to reject, with indignation, every tyrannical proceeding that might be suggested to him.

Ask thyself in the course of the day, during the night, in the midst of the tumult of thy court, in the retirement of thy closet, when thou dost reflect; and in what moment oughtest thou not to reflect upon the happiness of twenty-two millions of people whom thou cherishest, who have an affection for thee, and who anticipate by their wishes, the time when they may adore thee: ask thyself I say, whether thy intention be to perpetuate the absurd profusion of thy palace?

Whether thou wilt keep that multitude of high and subaltern officers who devour thee.

Whether thou wilt continue the expensive maintenance of that number of useless castles, with the enormous salaries granted to those who govern them.

Whether thou wilt still double and treble the expenses of thy household, by journies as costly as they are useless.

Whether thou wilt dissipate in scandalous festivals the subsistence of thy people.

Whether thou wilt allow that tables of a ruinous game,

the source of debasement and corruption, should be fixed under thy own inspection.

Whether thou wilt suffer thy treasury to be exhausted, in order to keep up the pomp of thy relations, and to maintain them in a state, the magnificence of which shall be enulous of thine own.

Whether thou wilt suffer, that the example of a treacherous luxury should disorder the senses of our women, and drive their husbands to despair.

Whether thou wilt sacrifice every day for the feed of thy horses, a quantity of subsistence, sufficient to nourish several thousands of thy subjects, who are perishing with hunger and misery.

Whether thou wilt still grant to certain members of the state, already too amply gratified, and to some military men, already enjoying a considerable stipend during a long series of years passed in idleness, sums of an extraordinary magnitude, for operations which it is their duty to perform, and which in every other government, except thine, they would be obliged to execute at their own expence.

Whether thou wilt persist in the fruitless possession of immense domains which yield thee nothing, and the alienation of which, while it might serve to discharge part of thy debt, would increase both thine own income and the riches of the nation. The man to whom every thing belongs as sovereign, ought not to possess any thing as a private man.

Whether wilt thou give way to the insatiable avidity of thy courtiers, and of the courtiers of thy relations.

Whether thou wilt permit that the nobles, the magistrates, and all powerful and protected persons in thy kingdom, should continue to cast off from their own shoulders the burden of the taxes, in order to make it fall with greater weight upon the people. A species of extortion against which the groans of the oppressed, and the remonstrances of enlightened men, have so long and so unavailingly been uttered.

Whether thou wilt confirm to a body of men, who are in possession of a fourth part of the riches of the kingdom, the absurd privilege of taxing themselves at discretion, and under the title of gratuitous offerings, which they are

not ashamed to give to their subsidies, to signify to thee that they owe thee nothing ; that they are not the less entitled to thy protection, and to all the advantages of society, without taking upon themselves any of the duties of it, and that thou hast no right to any return of gratitude from them.

When to these several questions thou hast of thyself given those just and sincere answers which thy feeling and royal heart shall dictate, let thy actions correspond with them. Be firm. Suffer not thyself to be shaken by any of those representations which duplicity or personal interest may suggest to restrain thee, perhaps even to inspire thee with terror ; and be assured that thou wilt soon be the most revered, and the most formidable potentate of the earth.

Yes, Lewis XVI, such is the fortune that awaits thee ; and it is in the confidence that thou wilt attain to it, that I still remain attached to life. I have but one word more to say to thee, but that is of importance. It is, that thou shouldst consider as the most dangerous impostors, as the most inveterate enemy of our happiness and of thy glory, the impudent flatterer, who shall not hesitate to lull thee into a state of fatal tranquillity ; either by representing to thee in a fainter light, the distressful picture of thy situation ; or by exaggerating the impropriety, the danger, and the difficulty, of employing the resources that may occur to thy mind.

Thou wilt hear it whispered around thee : “ These things cannot be done ; and even if they could, they are innovations.” Innovations let them be. But all the discoveries that have been made in the arts and sciences, have they not been equally so ? Is then the art of good government the only one that cannot be improved ? Or, are we to reckon as innovations, the general assembly of a great nation : the restoration of primitive liberty, and the respectable exertion of the first acts of natural justice ?

*Situation of the
India company
at the fall of
the system.*

At the fall of the system, the government gave up to the India company the monopoly of tobacco, in discharge of the ninety millions of livres [3,700,000l.]

they had lent. It also granted them the exclusive privilege of all the lotteries in the kingdom, and allowed them to convert into life annuities and tontines part of their shares. There remained only to the number fifty-six thousand of these, which, by subsequent events were reduced to fifty thousand two hundred sixty-eight and four-tenths. Unfortunately, this society preserved the privileges of the several companies out of which it had been formed; and this prerogative added neither to its wisdom nor power; it confined the negro trade, and stopped the progress of the sugar colonies. Most of its privileges served only to authorise odious monopolies. The most fertile regions upon earth, when occupied by the company, were neither peopled nor cultivated. The spirit of finance, which restrains pursuits as much as the commercial spirit enlarges them, became, and has ever since continued, the spirit of the company. The directors thought only of turning to their own advantage the rights ceded to the company in Asia, Africa, and America. It became a society of contractors, rather than that of merchants. Nothing could possibly be said in praise of their administration, had they not been so honest as pay off the debts accumulated in India for a century past; and taken care to secure Pondicherry against any invasion, by surrounding it with walls. Their trade was but trifling and precarious, till Orry was appointed to superintend the finances of the nation.

THAT upright and disinterested minister *Great success of*
 sullied his virtues by a harshness of temper, which he apologized for in a manner not much to the credit of the nation. *the company.* One day when a friend was reproaching him with the roughness of his manners, he answered, "how can I behave otherwise? Out of a hundred people I see in a day, fifty take me for a fool, and fifty for a knave." He had a brother named Fulvy, who was less rigid in his principles, but had more affability and a greater share of capacity. He intrusted him with the concerns of the company, which could not but flourish under such a direction.

Notwithstanding the former prejudices and those which still prevailed; notwithstanding the abhorrence the public

had for any remains of Law's system; notwithstanding the authority of the *forbonne*, which had decided that the dividend upon the shares came under the denomination of usury; notwithstanding the blindness of a nation, credulous enough not to be shocked at so absurd a decision; yet still the two brothers found means to convince cardinal Fleury, that it was proper to support the India company in an effectual manner. They even prevailed upon that minister, more skilful in the art of managing riches, than in that of increasing them, to lavish the king's favours upon this establishment. The care of superintending its trade, and of enlarging its powers, was afterwards committed to several persons of known abilities.

Dumas was sent to Pondicherry. He soon obtained leave of the court of Delhi to coin money; which privilege was worth four or five hundred thousand livres [from 16,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* to 20,833*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] a year. He obtained a cession of the territory of Karical, which intitled him to a considerable share in the trade of Tanjour. Some time after, a hundred thousand Marattas invaded the Decan. They attacked the nabob of Arcot, who was vanquished and slain. His family, and several of his subjects, took refuge in Pondicherry. They were received with all the kindness due to allies in distress. Ragogi Bouffola, the general of the victorious army, demanded, that they should be delivered up to him; and further required the payment of 1,200,000 livres [50,000*l.*] in virtue of a tribute, which he pretended the French had formerly submitted to.

Dumas made answer, that so long as the moguls had been masters of that country, they had always treated the French with the respect due to one of the most illustrious nations in the world, which, in her turn, took a pride in protecting her benefactors; that it was contrary to the character of that magnanimous nation to deliver up a number of women and children, and of unfortunate and defenceless men, to see them put to death; that the fugitives then in the town were under the protection of his king, who esteemed it his highest honour to be the protector of the distressed; that every Frenchman in Pondicherry would cheerfully die in their defence; and that his own life was forfeited, if his sovereign were to know that

he had so much as listened to the mention of a tribute. He added, that he was ready to defend the place to the last extremity; and if he should be overpowered, he would get on-board his ships, and return to Europe: that Ragogi might consider whether he chose to expose his army to utter destruction, when the greatest advantage that could be obtained by it was to take possession of a heap of ruins.

The Indians had not been accustomed to hear the French talk with so much dignity. This boldness staggered the general of the Marattas; and, after some negotiations skilfully carried on, he determined to grant peace to Pondicherry.

Whilst Dumas was procuring wealth and respect to the company, the government sent La Bourdonnais to the isle of France.

The Portuguese, at the time of their first voyages to India, had discovered to the east of Madagascar, between the 19th and 20th degrees of latitude, three islands, to which they gave the names of Mascarenhas, Cerne, and Rodrigue. There they found neither men nor quadrupeds, and attempted no settlement upon either of the islands. The most western of them, which had been called Mascarenhas, had for its first inhabitants, about the year 1660, seven or eight hundred Frenchmen. Five years after this, they were joined by two-and-twenty of their countrymen. Their number was soon further increased by the calamity which destroyed the colony of Madagascar. The breeding of cattle was the first resource of these adventurers, transplanted under a new sky. They afterwards cultivated European corn, Asiatic and African fruits, and some vegetables fit for that mild climate. The health, plenty, and freedom they enjoyed, induced several navigators, who came there for refreshments and subsistence, to settle among them. Industry was extended with population. In 1718, the discovery of a few wild coffee-trees suggested the idea of transplanting some coffee-trees from Arabia, which thrived extremely well. The culture of this precious tree, and other laborious employments, were performed by slaves from the coast of Africa, or from Madagascar. Then the island, which had changed its name from Mascarenhas to the isle of Bourbon, became an

important object to the company. There was, unfortunately, no harbour in the colony.

This inconvenience turned the views of the French minister at Versailles towards the island of Cerne, where the Portuguese had, as usual, left some quadrupeds and fowls for the benefit of such of their ships as necessity should oblige to touch there. The Dutch, who afterwards took possession of it, forsook it in 1712, from an apprehension of multiplying their settlements too much. The island was uninhabited when the French landed there in 1720, and changed its name from Mauritius to the *isle of France*, which it still bears.

Its first inhabitants came over from Bourbon, and were forgotten for fifteen years. They only formed, as it were, a *corps de garde*, with orders to hang out a French flag, to inform all nations that the island had a master. The company, long undetermined, decided at last for keeping it; and in 1735, La Bourdonnais was commissioned to improve it.

This man, who has since been so famous, was born at St. Malo, and had been at sea from the age of ten years; no sort of consideration had been able to interrupt his voyages, in every one of which he had signalized himself by some remarkable action. The Arabs and Portuguese, who were preparing to massacre one another in the road of Mocha, had been reconciled through his mediation, and he had displayed his valour in the war at Mahe. He was the first Frenchman who ever thought of sending med vessels into the Indian seas. He was known to be equally skilful in the art of ship-building, as in that of navigating and defending a ship. His schemes bore the mark of genius; nor were his views contracted by the close attention he paid to all the minute details of whatever he undertook. His mind was never alarmed with the appearance of difficulties, and he possessed the rare talent of inspiring the men under his command with the same elevation of spirit. His enemies have reproached him with an immoderate passion for riches; and it must be acknowledged he was not scrupulous in the means of acquiring them.

He was no sooner arrived at the *isle of France*, than he made it his business to acquire every information he

could concerning it, in which he was much assisted by his fortunate sagacity and his indefatigable activity. In a little time he endeavoured to instil a spirit of emulation into the first colonists on the island, who were entirely discouraged at the neglect with which they had been treated, and attempted to reduce to a strict subordination the vagrants lately arrived from the mother-country. He made them cultivate rice and wheat, for the subsistence of the Europeans, and cassava, which he had brought from Brazil, for the slaves. They were to be furnished from Madagascar with meat for the daily consumption of the inhabitants and of seafaring men, till the cattle they had procured from thence should multiply so considerably, as to prevent the necessity of importing any more. A post which he had established on the little island of Rodrigue, abundantly supplied the sick with turtle. Here ships going to India soon found all the refreshments and conveniences they wanted after a tedious passage. Three ships, one of which carried five hundred tons burden, were equipped and sent from the docks he had constructed. If the founder had not the satisfaction of bringing the colony to the utmost degree of prosperity it was capable of, at least he had the credit of having discovered what degree of importance it might acquire in able hands.

These improvements, however, though they seemed to be owing to enchantment, did not meet with the approbation of those who were principally concerned in them, and La Bourdonnais was compelled to justify himself. One of the directors was asking him one day how it happened that he had conducted the affairs of the company so ill, while he had taken so much care of his own? "Be-
" cause," said he, "I have managed mine according
" to my own judgment, and that of the company ac-
" cording to your directions."

Great men have been in all parts more useful to the public than large collective bodies. Nations and societies are but the instruments of men of genius; these have been the real founders of states and colonies. Spain, Portugal, Holland, and England, owe their foreign conquests and settlements to able warriors, experienced seamen, and legislators of superior talents. France especially is more indebted to some fortunate individuals for the

glory she has acquired, than to the form of her government. One of these superior men had just established the power of France over two important islands in Africa; another, still more extraordinary, added splendour to the French name in Asia; this was Dupleix.

He was first sent to the banks of the Ganges, where he superintended the colony of Chandernagore. That settlement, though formed in a part of the globe the best adapted for great commercial undertakings, had been in a languid state, till he took the management of it. The company had not been able to send any considerable funds to it; and the agents, who went over there without any property of their own, had not been able to avail themselves of the liberty that was allowed them of advancing their own private affairs. The activity of the new governor, who brought an ample fortune, the reward of ten years successful labours, soon spread throughout the colony. In a country abounding with money they soon found credit, when once they shewed themselves deserving of it. In a short time, Chandernagore excited the admiration of its neighbours, and the envy of its rivals. Dupleix, who had engaged the rest of the French in his vast speculations, opened fresh sources of commerce throughout the mogul's dominions, and as far as Thibet. On his arrival he had not found a single sloop, and he fitted out fifteen armed vessels at once. These ships carried on trade from one part of India to another. Some he sent to the Red sea, to the gulf of Persia, to Surat, to Goa, to the Maldives and Manilla islands, and to all the seas where there was a possibility of trading to advantage.

Dupleix had for twelve years supported the honour of the French name on the Ganges, and increased the revenue of the public, as well as the private fortunes of individuals, when he was called to Pondicherry, to take upon him the general superintendency of all the company's affairs in India. They were then in a more flourishing condition than they had ever yet been, or have ever been since; as the returns of that year amounted to twenty-four millions [1,000,000l.] Had they been still conducted with prudence, and had more confidence been placed in two such men as Dupleix and La Bourdonnais, it

is probable that such a power would have been established as would not have been easily destroyed.

La Bourdonnais saw an approaching rupture with England ; and proposed a scheme which would have secured to the French the sovereignty of the seas in Asia, during the whole course of the war. Convinced, that whichever nation should first take up arms in India, would have a manifest advantage over the other, he desired to be furnished with a squadron, with which he intended to sail to the isle of France, and there wait till hostilities began. He was then to set out from that island, in order to go and cruize in the straits of Sunda, through which most of the ships pass that are going to, or coming from, China. There he would have intercepted all the English ships, and saved those of the French. He would have even taken the small squadron which England sent into those latitudes ; and, having thus made himself master of the Indian seas, would have ruined all the English settlements in those parts.

The ministry approved of this plan, and granted him five men of war, with which he put to sea.

He had scarcely set sail, when the directors, equally offended at their being kept in the dark with regard to the destination of the squadron, and at the expences it had occasioned them, and jealous of the advantage this appointment would give to a man who, in their opinion, was already too independent, exclaimed against this armament as they had done before, and declared it to be useless. They were, or pretended to be, so fully convinced of the neutrality that would be observed in India between the two companies, that they persuaded the minister into that opinion, when La Bourdonnais was no longer present to animate him and guide his inexperience.

The court of Versailles was not aware, that a power, supported chiefly by trade, would not easily be induced to leave them in quiet possession of the Indian ocean ; and that, if she either made or listened to any proposals of neutrality, it must be only to gain time. It was not aware that, even supposing such an agreement was made *bona fide* on both sides, a thousand unforeseen events might interrupt it. It was not aware, that the object proposed could never be fully answered, because the sea-forces of

both nations, not being bound by any private agreement made between the two companies, would attack their ships in the European seas. It was not aware, that in the colonies themselves preparations would be made to guard against a surprise; that these precautions would create a mistrust on both sides; and that mistrust would bring on an open rupture. All these particulars were not perceived by the court, and the squadron was recalled. Hostilities began; and the loss of almost every French ship in India, shewed too late which of the two was the most judicious system of politics.

La Bourdonnais was as deeply affected for the errors that had occasioned the misfortunes of the nation, as if he had been guilty of them himself, and exerted all his powers to remedy them. Without magazines, without provisions, without money, he found means, by his attention and perseverance, to form a squadron, composed of a sixty-gun ship, and five merchantmen, which he turned into men of war. He ventured to attack the English squadron, beat them, pursued and forced them to quit the coast of Coromandel; he then besieged and took Madras, the first of the English settlements. The conqueror was preparing for fresh expeditions, which were certain and easy; but he met with the most violent opposition, which not only occasioned the loss of the sum 9,057,000 livres [377,375*l.*] he had stipulated for as the ransom of the city, but also deprived him of the success which must necessarily have followed this event.

The company was then governed by two of the king's commissaries, who were irreconcilable enemies to each other. The directors and the inferior officers had taken part in the quarrel, as they were swayed by their respective inclinations or interests. The two factions were extremely exasperated against each other. That which had caused La Bourdonnais's squadron to be taken from him, was enraged to see that he had found resources in himself, which frustrated every attack that was made upon him. There is good reason to believe, that this faction pursued him to India, and instilled the poison of jealousy into the heart of Dupleix. Two men formed to esteem and love each other, to adorn the French name, and perhaps to descend together to posterity, became the vile tools of an animos-

sity in which they were not the least interested. Dupleix opposed La Bourdonnais, and made him lose much time. The latter, after having staid too long on the coast of Coromandel, waiting for the succours which had been unnecessarily delayed, saw his squadron destroyed by a storm. The crews were disposed to mutiny. So many misfortunes, brought on by the intrigues of Dupleix, determined La Bourdonnais to return to Europe, where a horrid dungeon was the reward of his glorious services, and the end of the hopes which the nation had built upon his great talents. The English, delivered from that formidable enemy in India, and considerably reinforced, found themselves in a condition to attack the French in their turn; and accordingly laid siege to Pondicherry.

Dupleix then made amends for past errors. He defended the town with great skill and bravery; and after the trenches had been opened six weeks, the English were forced to raise the siege. The news of the peace arrived soon after, and all hostilities ceased between the companies of both nations.

The taking of Madras, La Bourdonnais's engagement at sea, and the raising of the siege of Pondicherry, gave the Indian nations a high opinion of the French; and they were respected in those parts as the first and greatest of the European powers.

Dupleix endeavoured to avail himself of this disposition, and his attention was engaged in procuring solid and important advantages for his nation. In order to judge rightly of his projects, we must lay before the reader a description of the state of Indostan at that time.

Description of Indostan. IF we may credit uncertain tradition, that fine rich country tempted the first conquerors of the world. But whether Bacchus, Hercules, Sesostris, or Darius, did or did not carry their arms through that large portion of the globe, certain it is, that it proved an inexhaustible fund of fictions and wonders to the ancient Greeks. These people, ever credulous, because they were carried away by their imagination, were so enchanted with these marvellous stories, that they still gave credit to them, even in the more enlightened ages of the republic.

If we consider this matter according to the principles of reason and truth, we shall find that a pure air, wholesome food, and great frugality, had early multiplied men to a prodigious degree in Indostan. They were acquainted with laws, civil government, and arts ; while the rest of the earth was desert and savage. Wise and beneficial institutions preserved these people from corruption, whose only care was to enjoy the benefits of the soil and of the climate. If from time to time their morals were tainted in some of these states, the empire was immediately subverted ; and when Alexander entered these regions, he found very few kings and many free cities.

A country divided into numberless little states, some of which were popular, and others enslaved, could not make a very formidable resistance against the hero of Macedonia. His progress therefore was rapid, and he would have subdued the whole country, had not death overtaken him in the midst of his triumphs.

By following this conqueror in his expeditions, the Indian Sandrocotus had learned the art of war. This obscure man, who had nothing to recommend him but his talents, collected a numerous army, and drove the Macedonians out of the provinces they had invaded. This deliverer of his country then made himself master of it, and united all Indostan under his dominion. How long he reigned, or what was the duration of the empire he had founded, is not known.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Arabs over-ran India, as they did many other parts of the world. They subjected some few islands to their dominion ; but, content with trading peaceably on the continent, they made but few settlements on it.

Three centuries after this, some barbarians of their religion, who came out from Khorassan, headed by Mahmoud, attacked India on the north side, and extended their depredations as far as Guzarat. They carried off immense spoils from those wealthy provinces, and buried them under ground in their wretched and barren deserts.

These calamities were not yet forgotten, when Gengis-Khan, who with his Tartars had subdued the greatest part of Asia, brought his victorious army to the western

borders of India. This was about the year 1200. It is not known what part this conqueror and his descendants took in the affairs of Indostan. Probably they did not concern themselves much about them; for it appears, that soon after the Patans reigned over this fine country.

These men were a set of savage peasants, who issuing in troops from the mountains of Candahar, spread themselves throughout the finest provinces of Indostan, and established there a succession of dominions independent of each other.

The Indians had scarce had time to accustom themselves to this foreign yoke, when they were once more forced to change masters. Tamerlane, who came from Great Tartary, and was already famous for his cruelties and his victories, advanced to the north side of Indostan, at the end of the fourteenth century, with a well-disciplined and triumphant army, inured to all the hardships of war. He secured the northern provinces himself, and abandoned the plunder of the southern ones to his lieutenants. He seemed determined to subdue all India, when, on a sudden, he turned his arms against Bajazet, overcame and dethroned that prince, and, by the union of all his conquests, found himself master of the immense space that extends from the delicious coast of Smyrna to the delightful borders of the Ganges. After his death, violent contests arose, and his posterity were deprived of his rich spoils. Babar, the sixth descendant of one of his children, alone survived to preserve his name.

That young prince, brought up in sloth and luxury, reigned in Samarcand, where his ancestor had ended his days. The Usbeck Tartars dethroned him, and constrained him to take refuge in the Cabulistan. Ranguildas, the governor of that province, received him kindly, and supplied him with troops.

This wise man addressed him in the following manner :
 “ It is not towards the north, where vengeance would naturally call thee, that thy steps must be directed. Soldiers, enervated by the pleasures of India, could not without rashness attack warriors famous for their courage and their victories. Heaven has conducted thee to the banks of the Indus, in order to fix upon thy brow one of the richest diadems in the universe. Turn thy

“ view towards Indostan. That emple, torn in pieces
 “ by the incessant wars of the Indians and Patans, calls
 “ for a master. It is in those delightful regions that thou
 “ must establish a new monarchy, and raise thy glory
 “ equal to that of the formidable Tamerlane.”

This judicious advice made a strong impression on the mind of Baba. A plan of usurpation was immediately traced out, and pursued with activity and skill. Success attended the execution. The northern provinces, not excepting Delhi, submitted after some resistance; and thus a fugitive monarch had the honour of laying the foundation of the power of the mogul Tartars, which subsists to this day.

The preservation of this conquest required a form of government. That which Babar found established in India, was a kind of despotism, merely relative to civil matters, tempered by customs, forms, and opinion; in a word, adapted to that mildness which these nations derive from the influence of the climate, and from the more powerful ascendant of religious tenets. To this peaceable constitution Babar substituted a severe and military despotism, such as might be expected from a victorious and barbarous nation.

If we may rely upon the authority of one of the men who is the most deeply versed in Indian traditions, Ranguildas was long witness to the power of their new sovereign, and exulted in the success of his own councils. The recollection of the steps he had taken to place his master's son upon the throne, filled him with a conscious and real satisfaction.

One day, as he was praying in the temple, he heard a Banian, who stood by him, exclaim, “ O God, thou seest
 “ the sufferings of my brethren. We are a prey to a
 “ young man who considers us as his property, which he
 “ may squander and consume at pleasure. Among the
 “ many children who call upon thee from these vast regions,
 “ one oppresses all the rest: avenge us of the tyrant;
 “ avenge us of the traitors who have placed him on
 “ the throne, without examining whether he was a just
 “ man.”

Ranguildas, astonished, drew near to the Banian, and said, “ O thou, who cursest my old age, hear me. If

" I am guilty, my conscience has misled me. When I restored the inheritance to the son of my sovereign, when I exposed my life and fortune to establish his authority, God is my witness, that I thought I was acting in conformity to his wise decrees; and, at the very instant when I heard thy prayer, I was still thanking Heaven for granting me in my latter days, those two greatest of blessings, rest and glory."

" Glory !" cries the Banian. " Learn, Ranguildas, that glory belongs only to virtue, and not to actions which are only splendid, without being useful to mankind. Alas ! what advantages did you procure to Indostan when you crowned the son of an usurper ? Had you previously considered whether he was capable of doing good, and whether he would have the will and resolution to be just ? You say, you have restored to him the inheritance of his fathers, as if men could be bequeathed and possessed like lands and cattle. Pretend not to glory, O Ranguildas ! or, if you look for gratitude, go and seek it in the heart of Babar ; he owes it you. You have purchased it at a great price, the happiness of a whole nation."

Babar however, while he was bringing his subjects under the yoke of despotism, took care to confine it within certain bounds, and to draw up his institutes with so much force, that his successors, though absolute, could not possibly be unjust. The prince was to be the judge of the people and the arbiter of the state ; but his tribunal and his council were to sit in public. Injustice and tyranny delight in darkness, that they may conceal themselves from their intended victims ; but when the monarch's actions are to be submitted to the inspection of his subjects, it is a sign he intends nothing but their good.—Openly to insult a number of men assembled, is such an outrage as even a tyrant would blush at.

The principal support of his authority was a body of four thousand men, who styled themselves the first slaves of the prince, out of this body were chosen the omrahs, those persons who composed the emperor's councils, and on whom he bestowed lands distinguished by great privileges. This sort of possessions always reverted to the crown. It was on this condition that all great offices

were given. So true it is, that despotism enriches its slaves only to plunder them.

Great interest, however, was made for the post of omrah. Whoever aspired to the government of a province, made this the object of his ambition. To prevent any projects the governors might form for their own aggrandizement or independence, they always had overseers placed about them, who were not under their controul, and who were commissioned to inspect the use they made of the military force they were entrusted with, to keep the conquered Indians in awe. The fortified towns were frequently in the hands of the officers, who were accountable only to the court. That suspicious court often sent for its delegate, and either continued or removed him, as it happened to suit its fluctuating policy. These changes were grown so common, that a new governor coming out of Delhi, remained upon his elephant with his face turned towards the city, "waiting," as he said, "to see his successor come out."

The form of government, however, was not the same throughout the empire; for the moguls had left several Indian princes in possession of their sovereignties, and even given them a power of transmitting them to their descendants. They governed according to the laws of the country, though accountable to a nabob appointed by the court. They were only obliged to pay tribute, and to conform to the conditions stipulated with their ancestors at the time of the conquest.

The conquering nation could not have committed any considerable ravages, since it does not yet constitute more than a tenth part of the population of India. There are a hundred millions of Indians to ten millions of Tartars. The two nations have never intermixed. The Indians are the only farmers and artificers. They alone live in the country, and carry on the manufactures. The mohamedans are to be found in the capital, at court, in great cities, in the camps and armies.

It appears, that at the period when the moguls entered Indostan, that country was no longer what it had formerly been. The landed property, which, in remote times, had been so firmly settled in the hands of private persons, was now generally become the prey of the depositaries of

authority. All the lands belonged to the Indian or Patan princes; and it may easily be imagined that savage conquerors, sunk in ignorance and avarice, did not rectify this abuse, which is the utmost stretch of arbitrary power. That portion of the lands of the empire which the new sovereigns call their own, was divided into large governments which were called subahships. The subahs, who were intrusted with the civil and military government, were also appointed to receive the revenues. This they committed to the care of the nabobs, whom they established throughout their subahships; and these again trusted this business to private farmers, whose immediate concern it was to cultivate the lands.

At the beginning of their year, which is in June, the nabob's officers agreed with the farmers for the price of their farm. A kind of deed was drawn up, called jamabandi, which was deposited in the chancery of the province; after which, the farmers went, each in his own district, to look for husbandmen, and advanced them considerable sums to enable them to sow the ground. After harvest, the farmers remitted the produce of their grounds to the nabob's officers.

The nabob delivered it to the subah, and the subah paid it into the emperor's treasury. The agreements were commonly for half the produce of the land; the other half went to pay the charges of culture, to enrich the farmers, and to subsist those whom they employed in tilling the land. In this system were comprised not only corn, which is the principal crop, but all other productions of the earth. Betel, salt, and tobacco, were all farmed in the same manner.

There were also some custom-houses, and some duties upon the public markets; but no poll-tax, or any tax upon industry. These arbitrary rulers had not thought of requiring any thing from men who had nothing left them. The weaver, sitting at his loom, worked without solicitude, and freely disposed of the fruit of his labour.

This liberty extended to every kind of moveables. They were truly the property of private persons, who were not accountable to any person for them. They could dispose of them in their life-time; and after their

death, they devolved to their offspring. The houses of artificers, the town houses with the little gardens belonging to them, were likewise accounted private property. They were hereditary, and might be sold. In the latter case, the buyer and seller appeared before the cothoal. The conditions of the bargain were drawn up in writing; and the cothoal affixed his seal to the deed to make it valid.

The same formality was observed with regard to the purchase of slaves; that is, of those unfortunate men, who, under the pressure of poverty, chose rather to be in bondage to one man who allowed him a subsistence, than to live under that general slavery in which they had no means of procuring the necessaries of life. They then sold themselves for a sum of money; and this was transacted in presence of the cothoal, that the master's property might not be contested.

The cothoal was a kind of notary public. There was one in every district of a certain size. It was before him that the few deeds were transacted, which the nature of such a government would admit of. Another officer, called jemidar, decided all differences that arose between man and man; and his decisions are almost always definitive, unless the cause was a very important one, or unless the aggrieved party was rich enough to pay for having it reversed at the nabob's court. The jemidar was likewise intrusted with the police. He had a power of inflicting slight punishments; but all capital offences were reserved for the judgment of the nabob, as he alone had a right to pronounce sentence of death.

Such a government, which was no better than despotism gradually descending from the throne down to the meanest officer, could have no other spring than a coercive power constantly exerted. Accordingly, as soon as the rainy season was over, the monarch quitted his capital, and resided in his camp. The nabobs, the rajahs, and the principal officers, were summoned to attend him; and in this manner he proceeded through all the provinces successively in military parade, which, however, did not preclude political artifice. One great man was often employed to oppress another. The most odious refinement of despotism is that of dividing its slaves. These divi-

tions were fomented by informers, publicly kept by the prince, who were continually spreading alarm and terror. These spies were always chosen among persons of the first rank. Corruption is at its height when power can enable what is mean.

Every year the great mogul set out on his travels, more as a conqueror than as a sovereign. He went to administer justice in the provinces as if he were going to plunder them; and maintained his authority by a parade of military force, which makes arbitrary government a continual state of war. This manner of governing, though with legal forms, is very dangerous for the monarch. So long as the people feel their wrongs merely through the channel of those who are invested with this authority, they only murmur, upon the supposition that the sovereign is ignorant of them, and would not suffer any injustice if he knew it: but when the sovereign gives it a sanction by his presence and by his own decisions, then all confidence is at an end; the deception vanishes: he was a god; now he is an idiot, or a wicked man.

The mogul emperors, however, have long enjoyed the superstitious idea the nation had conceived of their sacred character. That outward pomp which captivates the people more than justice, because men are more affected with what dazzles their eyes, than with what is beneficial to them; the richness and splendour of the princes' court; the grandeur that surrounded him in his travels; all this kept up in the minds of the people those prejudices of servile ignorance which trembles before the idol it has raised. The various accounts that have been transmitted to us of the luxury of the most brilliant courts in the world are not to be compared to the most ostentatious parade of the great mogul when he appears in public. The elephants, formerly so dreadful in war, but which are become useless in an army, since the use of cannon; these immense animals, that are unknown in our climates, give an Asiatic monarch an air of grandeur, of which we have no conception. The people fall prostrate before their majestic sovereign, who sits exalted upon a throne of gold, glittering with precious stones, mounted on the haughty animal, who proceeds slowly, proud to present the master of a great empire to the respect of so many slaves. Thus, by dazzling the eyes of

men, or inspiring them with terror, the moguls preserved, and even enlarged their conquests. Aurengzebe completed them, by making himself master of the whole peninsula. All Indostan, except a small portion of it along the coast of Malabar, submitted to that superstitious and barbarous tyrant, who had imbrued his hands in the blood of his father, his brothers, and his nephews.

This infamous despot made the mogul power an object of detestation; but he supported it as long as he lived. At his death it was irrecoverably reduced. The uncertainty, as to the right of succession, was the first cause of the disturbances that arose after his demise, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Only one law was generally acknowledged; that which enacted, that the sceptre should never go out of the family of Tamerlane; but every emperor was at liberty to choose his successor, without being obliged to regard the degree of consanguinity. This indefinite right proved a source of discord. Young princes, whose birth entitled them to expect the crown, and who frequently were at the head of a province and an army, supported their claim sword in-hand, and paid little regard to the will of a monarch who was no more. This happened at the death of Aurengzebe. His rich spoils were stained with blood. In these convulsions of the state, the springs that restrained an army of twelve hundred thousand men were relaxed. Every nabob aimed at being independent, increasing the contributions raised upon the people, and lessening the tributes sent into the emperor's treasury. No longer was any thing regulated by law; all was carried on by caprice, or thrown into confusion by violent measures.

The education of the young princes promised no remedy for all these evils. Left to the care of women till the age of seven years, tutored afterwards in some religious principles, they wasted in the soft indulgencies of a seraglio those years of youth and activity which ought to be employed in forming the man, and instructing him in the knowledge of life. Care was taken to enervate them, that they might not become dangerous. Conspiracies of children against their fathers were frequent. A suspicious system of policy tended to weaken the character of these young men, in order that they should not be capable of committing a

crime. Hence that shocking thought of an oriental poet, that "fathers, while their sons are living, are fondest of
" their grandsons, because they love in them the enemies
" of their enemies."

The moguls retained nothing of those hardy manners they had brought with them from their mountains. Those among them who were advanced to high offices, or had acquired large fortunes, changed their habitations according to the seasons. In these retirements, which were some of them more delightful than others, they lived in houses built only of clay or earth, but the inside of which presented every Asiatic luxury, together with all the pomp of the most corrupted courts. Wherever men cannot raise a lasting fortune, nor transmit it to their posterity, they are desirous of crowding all their enjoyments in the only moment they can call their own. Every pleasure, and even life itself, is exhausted in the midst of perfumes and women.

The mogul empire was in this state of weakness when it was attacked, in 1738, by the famous Nadercha, better known among us by the name of Thamas Kouli-Kan. The innumerable armies of India were dispersed without resistance, by a hundred thousand Persians; as those very Persians had formerly fled before thirty thousand Greeks trained by Alexander. Thamas entered victorious into Delhi, received the homage of Muhammet, suffered that weak monarch to live and to reign, united to Persia all the provinces that suited him, and returned loaded with an immense booty, the spoils of Indostan.

Muhammet, despised by his conqueror, was still more so by his subjects. The great men would not serve under a vassal of the king of Persia. The nabobships became independent, paying only a small tribute. In vain did the emperor declare that the nabobs should still be removable; each of them strove with all his power to make his dignity hereditary, and the sword decided every contest. The subjects were constantly at war with their master, and were not considered as rebels. Whoever could afford to pay a body of troops, pretended to a sovereignty. The only formality observed was, to counterfeit the emperor's sign manual in a *firman*, or warrant of investiture. It was brought to the usurper, who received it on his knees. This

farce was necessary to impose upon the people, who had still respect enough remaining for the family of Tamerlane, to choose that all authority should, at least, appear to proceed from that source.

Thus did discord, ambition, and anarchy, oppress this beautiful region of Indostan. Crimes could the more easily be concealed, as it was the custom of the great never to write but in ambiguous terms, and to employ none but obscure agents, whom they disowned when they found it necessary. Assassination and poisoning became common crimes, which were buried in the dark recesses of those impenetrable palaces, full of attendants, ever ready to perpetrate the blackest acts on the least signal from their master.

The foreign troops that were called in by the contending parties completed the miseries of this unhappy country. They carried off all the riches of the land, or obliged the owners to bury them under ground ; and thus it was that the treasures amassed for so many ages gradually disappeared. A general dejection ensued. The grounds lay fallow, and the manufactures stood still. The people would no longer work for foreign plunderers, or domestic oppressors. Want and famine were soon felt. These calamities, which for ten years had infested the provinces of the empire, began to visit the coast of Coromandel. The wise Nizam-el Muluck, subah of the Decan, was now no more. His prudence and talents had kept that part of India which he commanded in a flourishing state. The European merchants were apprehensive that their trade might fail when it had lost that support. They saw no resource against the danger, but to have a territory of their own, large enough to contain a number of manufacturers sufficient to make up their lading.

*Means employed
by the French to
acquire large pos-
sessions in India.*

DUPLEIX was the first who considered this as a practicable scheme. The war had brought many troops to Pondicherry, with which he hoped, by rapid conquests, to procure greater advantages than the rival nations had obtained by a steady conduct and mature deliberation.

He had long studied the character of the moguls, their

intrigues and their political interests. He had acquired such knowledge of these matters as might have been surprising even in a man brought up at the court of Delhi. This knowledge, deeply combined, had convinced him that it would be in his power to attain a principal influence in the affairs of Indostan; possibly, to manage them at his pleasure. His spirit, which prompted him to attempt more than he was able to perform, gave additional strength to his reflections. Nothing terrified him in the great part he proposed to act at the distance of six thousand leagues from his native country. In vain did his friends represent to him the dangers attending such an undertaking; he considered nothing but the glorious advantage of securing to France a new dominion in the heart of Asia; of enabling her, by the revenues annexed to it, to defray the charges of trade and the expences of sovereignty; and even of freeing her from the tribute which our luxury pays to the industry of the Indians, by procuring rich and numerous cargoes, which should not be bought with any exports of money, but with the overflowings of the new revenues. Full of this great project, Dupleix eagerly seized the first opportunity that offered to put it in execution, and soon took upon him to dispose of the subahship of the Decan, and the nabobship of the Carnatic, in favour of two men who were ready to give up any thing he should require.

The subahship of the Decan is a viceroyalty, made up of several provinces which were formerly so many independent states. It extends from Cape Comoria to the Ganges. The subah has the superintendace of all the Indian princes, and all the mogul governors within his jurisdiction; and in his hands are deposited the contributions that are destined to fill the public treasure. He can compel his inferior officers to attend him in all military expeditions he may think proper to make into the countries under his dominion; but he is not allowed to march them into a foreign territory, without an express order from the emperor.

The subahship of the Decan becoming vacant in 1748, Dupleix, after a series of events and revolutions, in which the corruption of the moguls, the weakness of the Indians, and the boldness of the French, were equally conspicuous, disposed of it towards the beginning of the year, 1751, in favour of Salabat-jing, a son of the late viceroy.

This success secured great advantages to the French settlements along the coast of Coromandel; but Pondicherry was a place of such importance that it was thought to deserve a particular attention. This town, which is situated in the Carnatic, has such constant and immediate connections with the nabob of that rich district, that it was thought advisable to procure the government of the province for a man whose affection and submission might be depended upon. The choice fell upon Chunda-Saeb, a relation of the late nabob, well known for his intrigues, his misfortunes, his warlike exploits, and his steadiness of temper.

In return for their services, the French made him give up an immense territory. The principal of their acquisitions was the island of Seringham, formed by the two branches of the Caveri. This long and fertile island derives its name and its consequence from a pagoda; which is fortified, as are most great buildings that are devoted to public worship. The temple is surrounded with seven square enclosures, at the distance of three hundred and fifty feet from each other, and formed by walls of a moderate height, which are proportionably thick. The altar stands in the centre. A single monument of this kind, with its fortifications, and the mysteries and riches it contains, is more likely to enforce and perpetuate a religion, than a multiplicity of temples and priests dispersed in different towns, with their sacrifices, ceremonies, prayers, and discourses, which, by their number, their frequent repetition, and their being performed in public, are apt to tire the people: these are also exposed to the contempt of enlightened reason, to dangerous profanations, or to the slight and neglect of the people; a circumstance which the priests dread more than sacrilege itself. The priests of India, as wise as those of Egypt, suffer no stranger to penetrate into the pagoda of Seringham. Amidst the fables in which the history of this temple is involved, probably some acute philosopher might, if he were admitted into it, trace from the emblems, the form and construction of the edifice, and the superstitious practices and traditions peculiar to that sacred inclosure, many sources of instruction, and acquire an insight into the history of the most remote ages. Pilgrims resort thither from all parts of Indostan, to obtain absolu-

tion of their sins, and always bring an offering proportionable to their circumstances. These gifts were still so considerable at the beginning of the present century, as to maintain forty thousand men in a life of sloth and idleness. The bramins of this temple, though under the restraints of subordination, were seldom known to quit their retirement for the more busy scenes of intrigue and politics.

Independent of other advantages which the French enjoyed by the acquisition of Seringham, the situation gave them great influence over the neighbouring countries, and an absolute command over the kingdom of Tanjour, as they could at any time stop the waters that were wanted for the culture of the rice.

The territories of Karikal and Pondicherry obtained an accession of ten leagues each, with fourscore villages. If these acquisitions were not so considerable as that of Seringham in point of political influence, they were much more so with regard to trade.

But this was a trifling acquisition, compared to the territory that was gained to the north, which comprehended the Condavir, Masulipatnam, the island of Divi, and the four provinces of Mustafanagur, Elur, Rajamandry, and Chicakol. Such important concessions made the French masters of the coast for the space of six hundred miles, and procured them the best linen in Indostan. It is true they were to enjoy the four provinces no longer than they should furnish the subah with a stipulated number of troops, and maintain them at their own expence; but this agreement, which was only binding to their honesty, gave them little concern. Their ambition made them already think themselves in possession of the treasures that had been heaped up in those vast regions for so many ages.

The ambitious views of the French, and their projects of conquest, were carried much beyond this. They proposed to obtain a cession of the capital of the Portuguese colonies, and to seize upon the district of a triangular form, which lies between Masulipatnam, Goa, and Cape Comorin.

In the meantime, till they could realize these brilliant chimeras, they considered the personal honours that were lavished upon Dupleix as a presage of the greatest prosperity. It is well known, that every foreign colony is in some

degree odious to the natives ; it is therefore good policy to endeavour to lessen this aversion, and the surest way to attain that end is, to conform as much as possible to the customs and manners of the country. This maxim, which is in general true, is more particularly so in countries where the people reflect but little ; and is consequently so in India.

The inclination which the French commander had for Asiatic pomp, was still a further inducement with him, to conform to the customs of the country. Accordingly, he was exceedingly rejoiced when he saw himself invested with the dignity of a nabob. That title put him upon a level with those whose protection he solicited before, and afforded him considerable opportunities to pave the way for those great revolutions he meditated, in order to promote the important interests he was intrusted with. He entertained still greater hopes on being appointed governor of all the mogul possessions, throughout an extent little inferior to the whole kingdom of France. All the revenues of those rich provinces were to be deposited in his hands, and he was accountable to none but the subah himself.

Though these agreements entered into by merchants could not be very pleasing to the court of Delhi, they were not much afraid of its resentment. The emperor, being in want of men and money, which the subahs, the nabobs, the rajahs, his meanest delegates, took upon themselves to refuse him, found himself attacked on all sides.

The rajaputes, descended from those Indians with whom Alexander had been engaged in battle, being driven out of their lands by the moguls, took shelter in some mountains that are almost inaccessible. Continual disturbances put it out of their power to think of conquests ; but in the intervals of their dissensions, they make inroads that cannot fail of harassing an empire already exhausted.

The Patans are still more formidable enemies. Driven by the moguls from most of the thrones of Indostan, they have taken refuge at the foot of Mount Imaus, which is a continuation of the Caucasus. That situation has strangely altered their manners, and given them a fierceness of temper which they had not in a milder climate. War is their chief employment. They serve alike under the banners of Indian or mohammedan princes ; but their obedience is not

equal to their valour. Whatever crime they may have been guilty of, it is dangerous to punish them; for they are so vindictive, that they will murder when they are weak, and revolt when they are strong enough to attempt any bold enterprise. Since the reigning power has lost its strength, the nation has shaken off the yoke. Not many years ago, their generals carried on their ravages as far as Delhi, and did not quit that capital till they had plundered it.

To the north of Indostan is a nation, which, though lately known, is the more formidable for being a new enemy. This people, distinguished by the name of Sheiks, have found means to free themselves from the chains of despotism and superstition, though surrounded by nations of slaves. They are said to be followers of a philosopher of Thibet, who inspired them with some notions of liberty, and taught them theism without any mixture of superstition. They first appeared in the beginning of the present century; but were then considered rather as a sect than as a nation. During the calamities of the mogul empire, their number increased considerably by apostates of all religions, who joined with them, and sought shelter among them from the oppressions and fury of their tyrants. To be admitted of that society, nothing more is required than to swear implacable hatred against monarchy. It is asserted, that they have a temple, with an altar, on which stands their code of laws, and next to it a sceptre and a dagger. Four old men are elected, who occasionally consult the law, which is the only supreme power this republic obeys. The Sheiks actually possess the whole province of Punjal, the greatest part of the Moultan, and the Sindi, both banks of the Indus, from Cassimere to Tatta, and all the country towards Delhi, from Lahor to Serhend: they can raise an army of sixty thousand good cavalry.

But of all the enemies of the moguls, none are, perhaps, so dangerous as the Marattas. This nation, of late so famous, as far as the obscurity of their origin and history will allow us to conjecture, possessed several provinces of Indostan, from whence they were driven by the fear or the arms of the moguls. They fled into the mountains which extend from Surat to Goa, and there formed several tribes, which in process of time united into one state, of which

Satarah was for a long time, and Ponah now is, the capital.

Most of them carried vice and licentiousness to all the excesses which might be expected from an ignorant people, who have cast off the yoke of prejudices, without substituting wholesome laws and knowledge in their stead. Tired of laudable and peaceful labours, they thought of nothing but rapine. Yet this was confined to the plundering of a few villages, and the robbing of some caravans; till the coast of Coromandel, being threatened by Aurengzebe, made them sensible of their strength, by imploring their assistance.

At this period, they were seen coming out of their rocks, mounted on small and ill-shaped horses, but stout, and accustomed to indifferent feeding, to difficult roads, and to excessive fatigue. The whole accoutrement of a Maratta horseman consisted of a turban, a girdle, and a cloak. His provisions were a little bag of rice, and a leather bottle full of water. His only weapon was an excellent sabre.

Notwithstanding the assistance of these barbarians, the Indian princes were forced to bend to the yoke of Aurengzebe; but the conqueror, weary of contending with irregular troops, which were continually ravaging the newly-reduced provinces, determined to conclude a treaty that would have been dishonourable, had it not been dictated by necessity, which is stronger than prejudices, oaths, and laws. He ceded for ever to the Marattas the fourth part of the revenues of the Decan, a subahship formed out of all his usurpations in the peninsula.

This kind of tribute was regularly paid as long as Aurengzebe lived. After his death, it was granted or refused, according to circumstances. The levying of it brought the Marattas in arms to the remotest parts of their mountains. Their boldness increased during the anarchy of Indostan. They have made the empire tremble; they have deposed monarchs; they have extended their frontiers; they have granted their protection to rajas and nabobs who strove to be independant, and their influence has been unbounded.

While the court of Delhi was with difficulty contending with so many enemies, all conspiring to effect its ruin, M. de Buffly, who, with a small corps of French troops, and an army of Indians, had conducted Salabat-jing to Auren-

gabab his capital, endeavoured to establish him on the throne where he had placed him. The weakness of this prince, the conspiracies which it had occasioned, the firmans or privileges which had been granted to rivals, and other impediments, obstructed, but could not subvert his projects. By his means the prince reigned more peaceably under the protection of the French than could have been expected, considering the circumstances of his situation; and he preserved him absolutely independent of the head of the empire.

Chunda-Saeb, appointed nabob of the Carnatic, was not in so happy a situation. The English, ever in opposition to the French, had stirred up a rival against him, named Mohammed-Ali-Khan. The names of those two princes served as a pretence for carrying on a vigorous war between the two nations: they fought for glory, for wealth, and to serve the passions of their respective commanders, Dupleix and Saunders. Victory declared alternately for each army. Success would not have been so fluctuating, had the governor of Madras had more troops, or the governor of Pondicherry better officers. It was difficult to conjecture which of those two men, who were both of the same inflexible temper, would in the end obtain the superiority; but it was very certain that neither would submit, while he had either troops or money left. Nor was it likely that either of them would soon be reduced to this extremity, notwithstanding their amazing efforts, because they both found such resources in their hatred and their genius, as even the most able men could not have any conception of. It was evident that the disturbances in the Carnatic would not be at an end, unless the peace was first settled in Europe; and it was to be feared that the flame, which had been confined to India for six years, might spread further. The ministers of France and England obviated this danger, by enjoining the two companies to fix certain terms of agreement. They made a conditional treaty, which began by suspending all hostilities at the commencement of the year 1755; and was to end by establishing between them a perfect equality of territory, of strength, and of trade, on the coasts of Coromandel and Orissa. This stipulation had not yet received the sanction of the courts of London and Versailles,

when greater interests kindled a fresh war between the two nations.

War between the English and French. The French lose all their settlements. THE report of this great contest, which began in North-America, and spread itself throughout the universe, reached the East-Indies at a time when the English were

engaged in a very intricate war with the subah of Bengal. Had the French been then in the same state they were some years before, they would have joined with the natives. From narrow views and ill-judged interests, they were desirous of entering into a formal convention, to secure the neutrality which had subsisted on the banks of the Ganges during the last disturbances. Their rivals amused them with the hopes of settling this convention, so long as they wanted to keep them in a state of inaction. But as soon as their successes had enabled them to make their own terms, they attacked Chandernagore. The reduction of this place was followed by the ruin of all the factories dependent upon it, and put the English in a condition to send men, money, provisions, and ships, to the coast of Coromandel, where the French were just arrived with considerable land and sea forces.

These forces, destined to protect the settlements of their own nation, and destroy those of the enemy, were more than sufficient to answer both those purposes. The only point was to make a proper use of them; but there was a mistake in this from the beginning, as will plainly appear from the following observations.

Before the commencement of the war, the company possessed, on the coasts of Coromandel and Orissa Masulipatnam, with five provinces; a large circuit of land about Pondicherry, which for a long time before had been nothing but a sandbank; and an extent nearly of the same size in the neighbourhood of Karical; and, lastly, the island of Seringham. These possessions made four tracts of country, too far distant to support each other. They bore the marks of the wild fancy and extravagant imagination of Dupleix, who had made these acquisitions.

These political errors might have been amended. Dupleix, who compensated for his defects by his great quali-

ties, had acquired so great an influence, that he was offered the perpetual government of the Carnatic. It was the most flourishing province in all the mogul empire. By singular and fortunate circumstances, it had been governed successively by three nabobs of the same family, who had been equally attentive to agriculture and industry. General felicity had been the result of this mild government and public-spirited conduct, and the public revenues had increased to twelve millions [50,000*l.*] A sixth part of this sum would have been given to Salabat-jing, and the rest would have been for the company.

If the ministry and the direction, who alternately supported and neglected their power in India, had but been capable of a firm and settled resolution, they might have sent orders to their agent to give up all the remote conquests, and to be content with that important settlement. It was alone sufficient to give the French a firm establishment, a compact territory in which the settlements would be contiguous, a very large quantity of merchandize, provisions for their fortified towns, and revenues sufficient to maintain a body of troops; which would have enabled them to set the jealousy of their neighbours, and the hatred of their enemies, at defiance. Unfortunately for them, the court of Versailles ordered that Dupleix should not accept of the Carnatic; and affairs remained as they were before that proposal.

The situation was critical. Dupleix was, perhaps, the only man who could support himself in it, or in his stead the celebrated officer who had the greatest share in his confidence, and was best acquainted with his schemes. The contrary opinion prevailed. Dupleix had been recalled. The general who was appointed to conduct the Indian war, imagined he must demolish a structure which ought only to have been supported in those troublesome times, and discovered his designs in so public a manner, as contributed greatly to heighten the imprudence of his resolutions.

This man, whose ungovernable temper could never adapt itself to circumstances, had received from nature none of those qualities that render a man fit for command. He was governed by a gloomy, impetuous, and irregular imagination; so that there was a perpetual contrast between his conversation and his projects, and between his projects

and his actions. Passionate, suspicious, jealous, and positive to excess, he created an universal diffidence and dejection, and excited animosities never to be suppressed. His military operations, his civil government, his political combinations, all bore evident marks of the confusion of his ideas.

The evacuation of the island of Seringham was the principal cause of the disasters that attended the war with Tanjour. Masulipatnam, and the northern provinces, were lost, from having given up the alliance of Salabat-jing. The inferior powers of the Carnatic, who no longer respected the French for the sake of their old friend the subah of the Decan, completed the general ruin by espousing other interests.

On the other hand, the French squadron, though superior to the English, with which it had engaged three several times without gaining any advantage over it, was at last obliged to leave it master of the seas, by which the fate of India was decided. Pondicherry, after struggling with all the horrors of famine, was forced to surrender on the 15th of January 1761. Lally had, the day before, corrected a plan of capitulation drawn up by the council; he had named deputies to carry it to the enemy's camp; and, by a contradiction that was characteristic of the man, he gave the deputies a letter for the English general, in which he told him, "he would have no capitulation, because the English were such people that they would not adhere to it."

In taking possession of the place, the conqueror caused not only the troops that had defended it, but all the French in the company's service, to be shipped off for Europe; and, not satisfied even with that revenge, they destroyed Pondicherry, and made that noble city a heap of ruins.

Those of the inhabitants who were sent over to France, arrived in despair, at having lost their fortunes, and seen their houses demolished as they quitted the shore. They filled Paris with their clamours; they excited the indignation of the public against their governor; they impeached him as the author of all their miseries, and the sole cause of the loss of a flourishing colony. Lally was taken up and tried by the parliament. He had been accused of high treason and extortion; of the first he was acquitted, and of the

second no proof could be brought ; yet Lally was condemned to lose his head.

Let us ask, in the name of humanity, what his crime was, that it should be punishable by law ? The awful sword of justice was not put into the hands of the magistrate to gratify private resentment, or even to follow the emotions of public indignation. The law alone must point out its own victims ; and, if the clamours of a blind and incensed multitude could sway with the judges to pronounce a capital sentence, the innocent might suffer for the guilty, and there would be no safety for the citizen. In this point of view let us examine the sentence.

It declares, that Lally stands convicted of “ having betrayed the interests of the king of the state, and of the “ India company.” What is meant by betraying of interests ? What law is there that makes it death to be guilty of this vague and indefinite crime ? No such law either does or can exist. Disgrace from the prince, contempt from the nation, and public infamy ; these are the proper punishments for the man, who, from incapacity or folly, has not served his country as he ought : but death, and that too upon a scaffold, is destined for crimes of a different nature.

The sentence further declares, that Lally stands convicted “ of vexations, exactions, and abuse of authority.” No doubt he was guilty of these in numberless instances. He made use of violent means to procure pecuniary aids ; but this money was put into the public treasure. He injured and oppressed the citizens ; but he never attempted any thing against their lives or against their honour. He erected gibbets in the market-place, but caused no one to be executed upon them.

In fact, he was a madman of a dark and dangerous cast ; an odious and despicable man ; a man totally incapable of command. But he was neither guilty of public extortions nor treason ; and, to use the expression of a philosopher, whose virtues do honour to humanity, “ every one had a “ right to kill Lally, except the executioner.”

THE misfortunes that befel the French in Asia had been foreseen by all considerate men, who reflected on the corruption of the nation. Their morals especially had

Causes of the misfortunes of the French.

degenerated in the voluptuous climate of India. The wars which Dupleix had carried on in the inland parts had laid the foundation of many fortunes. They were increased and multiplied by the gifts which Salabat-jing lavished on those who conducted him in triumph to his capital, and fixed him on the throne. The officers who had not shared the dangers, the glory, and the benefits of those brilliant expeditions, found out an expedient to comfort themselves under their misfortune ; which was, to reduce the sipahis to half the number they were ordered to maintain, and to apply their pay to their own benefit ; which they could easily do, as the money passed through their hands. The agents for trade, who had not these resources, accounted to the company but for a very small part of the profits made upon the European goods they sold, though they ought to have been all their own ; and sold them those in India at a very high price, which they ought to have had at prime cost. Those who were intrusted with collecting the revenue of any particular spot, farmed it themselves under Indian names, or let it for a trifle, upon receiving a handsome gratuity ; they even frequently kept back the whole income of such estates, under pretence of some imaginary robbery or devastation, which had made it impossible to collect it. All undertakings, of what nature soever, were clandestinely agreed upon, and became the prey of the persons employed in them, who had found means to make themselves formidable, or of such as were most in favour, or richest. The authorised abuse that prevails in India, of giving and receiving presents on the conclusion of every treaty, had multiplied these transactions without necessity. The navigators who landed in those parts, dazzled with the fortunes which they saw increased fourfold from one voyage to another, no longer regarded their ships, but as the means of carrying on trade and acquiring wealth. Corruption was brought to its greatest height by people of rank, who had been disgraced and ruined at home ; but who, being encouraged by what they saw, and impelled by the reports that were brought to them, resolved to go themselves into Asia, in hopes of retrieving their shattered fortunes, or of being able to continue their irregularities with impunity. The personal conduct of the directors made it necessary for them to connive at all these disorders. They were reproach-

ed with attending to nothing in their office but the credit, the money, and the power it gave them ; with giving the most important posts to their own relations, men of no morals, application, or capacity ; with multiplying the number of factors without necessity and without bounds, to secure friends in the city and at court ; and, lastly, they were accused of obtruding upon the public commodities which might have been bought cheaper and better in other places. Whether the government did not know of these excesses, or had not resolution enough to put a stop to them, it was, by its blindness or its weakness, in some measure accessory to the ruin of the affairs of the nation in India. It might even without injustice be charged with being the principal cause of them, by sending such improper persons to manage and defend an important settlement, which had no less to fear from its own corruption, than from the English fleets and armies.

THE disasters of the company abroad were aggravated by their situation equally distressful at home. It was necessary to represent these twofold misfortunes to the proprietors. This discovery occasioned a general despondency, which gave rise to a variety of different schemes, all equally absurd. These several schemes were hastily discussed ; nor was it possible that any of them could be fixed upon by men in such a state of uncertainty and diffidence. The deliberations were carried on with too much asperity ; and time, which was of so much consequence, was lost in upbraidings and invectives. No one could foresee where these commotions would end. The storm at length subsided, and fresh hopes began to dawn. The company, which the enemies to all exclusive privileges wished to see abolished, and which so many private interests had conspired to destroy, still maintained its ground ; but it was put upon a better footing ; a circumstance which was absolutely necessary.

Measures taken by the French to re-establish affairs in India.

Among the causes that had occasioned the distresses of the company, there was one which had long been looked upon as the source of all the rest ; this was the dependence, or rather the slavery, in which the government had kept that great body for near half a century.

Ever since the year 1723, the directors had been chosen by the court. In 1730, a commissary appointed by the king was introduced into the administration of the company. From this period there was an end to all freedom of debate; there was no longer any connection between those who had the management of affairs, and the proprietors; no immediate intercourse between the managers and the government. All was directed by the influence, and according to the views, of the court. Mystery, that dangerous veil of arbitrary administration, concealed all the operations; and it was not till 1744, that the proprietors were called together. They were empowered to name syndics, and to call a general meeting once a-year; but they were not better informed of the state of their affairs, nor more at liberty to direct them. The power of choosing the directors was still vested in the crown, and instead of one commissary, the king chose to have two.

From this time two parties were formed. Each commissary had his own scheme, his own favourites, and endeavoured to get his own projects adopted. Hence arose divisions, intrigues, informations, and animosities, which, though they originated in Paris, extended as far as India, and there broke out in a manner so fatal to the nation.

The minister, shocked at such a number of abuses, and weary of those endless contests, attempted to remedy them. It was imagined he had succeeded, by appointing a third commissary. This expedient, however, served only to increase the evil. Despotism had prevailed while there was but one; division ensued on the nomination of two; and from the moment three were appointed, all was anarchy and confusion. They were reduced to two, and pains were taken to preserve harmony as much as possible between them; and in 1764, there was but one, when the proprietors desired that the company might be brought back to its original form by restoring its freedom.

They ventured to represent to the government, that they might impute the disasters and errors of the company to themselves, as the proprietors had not been concerned in the management of their affairs; that they could never be carried on most advantageously both for them and for the state, till this could be done with freedom, and till an immediate intercourse was established between the proprietors

and the directors, and between the directors and the ministry; that whenever there was an intermediate person, the orders given on one part, and the reports made on the other, would necessarily, in passing through his hands, take a tincture of his own private views and inclinations, so that he would always be, in fact, the real and sole director of the company; that such a director, not being himself personally concerned in the affairs of the company, or not being a competent judge of them, would always sacrifice the welfare and true interest of trade, to add to the transient pomp of his appointment, and to secure the favour of placemen; that, on the contrary, every thing might be expected from a free direction, chosen by the proprietors, acting under their inspection, and in concert with them, and subject to no kind of restraint.

The government was sensible of the truth of these reasons. It secured the freedom of the company by a solemn edict; and some regulations were made, to put the direction of it under a new form.

The intention of these statutes was, that the company might no longer be ruled by men, who often were not worthy to be its factors; that the government might no further interfere than to protect it; that it might be alike preserved from that slavery under which it had so long been oppressed, and from that spirit of mystery, which had perpetuated its corruption; that there should be a constant intercourse between the directors and the proprietors; that Paris, deprived of the advantage enjoyed by the capitals of other commercial nations, of being a sea-port, might acquire a knowledge of trade in free and peaceable assemblies; that the citizen might form just notions of that powerful tie that connects all nations together, and, by informing himself of the sources of public prosperity, learn to respect the merchant whose operations contribute to it, and to despise the professions that are destructive of it.

These wise regulations were attended with happier consequences than could possibly be expected. A great activity was observed on all sides. During the five years that the new direction lasted, the sales produced annually 18,000,000 livres [750,000*l.*] They had not been so considerable, even in those times which had been looked upon as the most prosperous; for, from 1726 to 1736 inclusively,

they had amounted to no more than 437,376,284 livres [18,224,011*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.*] which makes upon an average, in peace and war, 14,108,912 livres [587,871*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] a-year.

Imminent distress was, however, concealed under this appearance of prosperity. When this was suspected, and endeavours were made to ascertain the matter, it was found that the company, on renewing its trade, was more indebted than it had been supposed. This is a circumstance common to all mercantile bodies, whose transactions are complicated, extensive, and carried on in distant countries. They have scarce ever a just idea of their situation. Whether this mistake be to be attributed to the fraud, neglect, or incapacity of their agents, certain it is, that it takes place almost universally. The confusion is still increased by the calamity of war. That which the French had been sustaining in India, had been tedious and unsuccessful. The expences and depredations of it were but imperfectly known; and the company began their operations, reckoning upon a larger capital than they possessed.

This mistake, ruinous in itself, was followed by other fatal errors, which arose, perhaps, from not having sufficiently reflected on the revolutions that had happened recently in India. The company flattered themselves that their sales would amount to twenty-five millions of livres [1,041,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] and they were below eighteen millions [750,000*l.*] They flattered themselves that the European commodities would be sold for fifty per cent. more than they had cost, while they scarce fetched their original price. They flattered themselves with a profit of cent. per cent. upon the productions that should be brought into our climates, and it amounted to no more than seventy-two per cent.

All these miscalculations, arose from the ruin of the French credit in India, and from the exorbitant power of the victorious nation that had lately subdued those distant regions: from the necessity there frequently was of taking upon credit bad merchandize from the English merchants, who were endeavouring to convey to Europe the immense fortunes they had amassed in Asia: from the impossibility of procuring funds necessary for carrying on the trade, without giving an exorbitant interest: from the obligation the com-

pany were under of supplying provisions for the isles of France and Bourbon, which advances were slowly and ill paid by the government, as well as the gratifications granted to them for their exports and imports.

Lastly, according to the plan of the directors, the expences necessary for the carrying on of trade, and for the maintaining of sovereignty, were not to exceed four millions [180,000l.] whereas, they amounted to more than twice that sum. The expences for maintaining the right of sovereignty might even be carried much beyond this in future, since, in their nature, they were capable of being extended and increased in conformity with the political views of the monarch, the sole judge of their importance and necessity.

In such a situation, it was impossible that the disorderly state of the affairs of the company should not be more and more increased. Their ruin, as well as that of their creditors, was upon the point of being completed, when government, warned by the repeated loans they were continually renewing, determined to inquire into the state of their finances. As soon as it became acquainted with them, it was thought proper to suspend their exclusive privilege of trade with India. Let us now examine what was the condition of the company at that period.

BEFORE 1764, the number of shares amounted to 50,268. At that period the ministry, who, in 1746, 1747, and 1748, had given up to the proprietors the produce of the shares and bonds which were their property, relinquished in their favour the shares and bonds themselves, to the number of 11,835 together, to indemnify them for the expences they had incurred during the last war. These shares having been cancelled, there remained but 38,432.

The charter of the company is suspended. Their state at that period.

The wants of the company obliged them to make a call of 400 livres [16l. 13s. 4d.] per share. Upwards of 34,000 shares answered the call. The 4000 that did not, were reduced, by the terms of the edict, which empowered the company to make the call, to five eighths of the value of those which had paid; so that, by this operation, the

number was reduced to 36,920 whole shares and six eighths.

The dividends on the shares of the French company, as of all other companies, have varied according to circumstances. In 1722 it was 100 livres [4l. 13s. 4d.] From 1723 to 1745 it was 150 [6l. 5s.] From 1746 to 1749 it was 70 [2l. 18s. 4d.] From 1750 to 1758 it was 80 [3l. 6s. 8d.] From 1759 to 1763 it was 40 [1l. 3s. 4d.]; and in 1764, it was but 20 livres [16s. 8d.] This account shews, that the dividend and the value of the stock, which always kept pace with it, was necessarily affected by the hazards of trade, and the fluctuation of popular opinion. Hence that prodigious rise and fall in the price of the shares, which fell in one year from two hundred [167l. 18s. reckoning each pistole at 16s. 9d.] to one hundred pistoles [83l. 15s.] then rose to 1800 livres [75l. 8s.] and soon after fell to 700 [29l. 3s. 4d.] Yet, in the midst of these revolutions, the stock of the company was much the same. But this is a calculation which the public never makes. It is determined by the circumstance of the present moment, and its confidence, as well as its fears, are always exaggerated.

The proprietors, who were under apprehensions of having their fortunes reduced to half in one day, would no longer run the risk of such a situation. In laying in a fresh stock to trade with, they desired to secure the remainder of their fortune in such a manner, as that the shares should at all times bear a settled price, and an interest that could be depended upon. The government settled this matter by an edict issued out in August 1764. The 13th article expressly says, that, to secure to the proprietors a settled income, independent of all future events of trade, a sufficient fund should be detached from that portion of the contract which was then free, to secure to every share a capital of 1600 livres [66l. 13s. 4d.] and an interest of 80 livres [3l. 6s. 8d.]; and that "neither that interest nor that capital, should, in any case, or for any cause whatsoever, be answerable for such engagements as the company might enter into after the date of this edict."

The company, therefore, owed for 36,920 shares and six eighths, at the rate of 80 livres [3l. 6s. 8d.] per share, an interest amounting to 2,953,660 livres [123,069l. 3s.

4d.] They paid for their several contracts 2,727,506 livres [113,646l. 1s. 8d.] which made in all 5,681,166 livres [236,715l. 5s.] of perpetual annuities. The life annuities amounted to 3,074,899 livres [128,120l. 15s. 10d.] The sum total of all these life annuities and annual payments was then 8,756,065 livres [364,836l. 10d.] In what manner the company raised money to answer their several demands, shall be the subject of our next inquiry.

That great body, which had been much too deeply concerned in Law's scheme, had advanced him 90,000,000 of livres [3,750,000.] When that system failed, the government made over to them in payment the exclusive sale of tobacco, which then brought in three millions [125,000l.] a-year; but they were left without a capital to trade with. This kept them in a state of inaction till 1726, when the government lent them its assistance. The rapid progress they made astonished all nations, and seemed to promise them a superiority over the most flourishing companies. This opinion, which was the general one, emboldened the proprietors to complain that their dividends were not doubled and trebled. They thought, as well as the public, that the king's treasury was enriched with their spoils. The profound secrecy with which every thing was carried on, greatly strengthened these surmises.

The breaking out of the war between France and England in 1744, dissolved the charm. The ministry, too much embarrassed in their own affairs to think of doing any thing for the company, left it to extricate itself. Then, indeed, every one was surprised to see that colossus ready to fall, which had never yet met with any shock, and whose greatest misfortune had been the loss of two ships of a moderate value. The company would have been ruined, had not the government in 1747, declared itself their debtor in the sum of 180,000,000 of livres [7,500,000l.] and engaged to pay them the interest of that sum for ever at five per cent. This engagement, which was in lieu of the exclusive sale of tobacco, is so important a point in the history of the company, that it would not be sufficiently illustrated if we did not trace the matter further back.

The use of tobacco, which was introduced into Europe after the discovery of America, made no very rapid progress in France. The consumption was so small, that the

first contract, which began the first of December 1674, and ended the first of October 1680, brought in but 500,000 livres [20,833l. 6s. 8d.] to the government the two first years, and 600,000 [25,000l.] the four last; though the right of stamping pewter had been joined to this privilege. This farm of the revenue was confounded with the general farms till 1691, when it still remained united to them, and was rated at 1,500,000 livres [62,500l.] a-year. In 1697, it became once more a separate farm on the same terms, till 1709, when it was increased to 100,000 livres [4166l. 13s. 4d.] more, till 1715. It was then renewed for three years only. The two first years ought to have produced 2,000,000 of livres [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] and the last 200,000 [8333l. 6s. 8d.] more. At that period it was increased to 4,020,000 livres [167,500l.] a-year; but this lasted only from the first of October 1718 to the first of June 1720. Tobacco then became a mercantile commodity all over the kingdom, and continued so till the first of September 1721. During this short interval, private persons laid in such a stock, that, when it came to be farmed out again, it could be done but at a moderate price. This contract, which was the eleventh, was for nine years, to commence on the first September 1721, and continue to the first October 1730. The farmers were to give 1,300,000 livres [154,166l. 13s. 4d.] for the first thirteen months; 1,800,000 [75,000l.] for the second year; 2,560,000 [106,666l. 13s. 4d.] for the third; and 3,000,000 [125,000l.] for each of the last six years. This agreement did not take place, because the India company, to whom the government owed 90,000,000 livres [3,750,000l.] which had been deposited in the royal treasury in 1717, demanded the farm of tobacco, which had then been made over to them for ever, and which, from particular events, they had never yet enjoyed. Their petition was found to be just, and they obtained what they so warmly solicited.

They managed this farm themselves, from the first of October 1723, to the last day of September 1730. The produce during that space was 50,083,967 livres 11 sous 9 deniers [about 2,086,831l. 18s. 10d.] which made 7,154,852 livres 10 sols 3 deniers [about 298,120l. 17s. 1d.] a-year; out of this must be deducted yearly

3,042,963l. 19s. 6d. [about 126,790l. 4s. 2d.] for the charges of preparing the land.

These charges were so enormous, that it was thought the business, which grew every day more considerable, would be better in the hands of the farmers-general, who would manage it at less expence by means of the clerks they employed for other purposes. The company accordingly farmed it for eight years, at the rate of 7,500,000 livres [312,500l.] for each of the first four years, and 8,000,000 [333,333l. 6s. 8d.] for each of the four last. This contract was continued upon the same terms till the month of June 1747; and the king promised to account with the company for the increase of the produce, as soon as it should be known and ascertained.

At this period, the king united the tobacco farm to his other duties, creating and alienating, for the use of the company, an annuity of nine millions [375,000l.] for ever, upon a capital of an hundred and eighty millions [7,500,000l.] This large compensation was thought to be due to them for the old debt of ninety millions [3,750,000l.] for the overplus of the profit upon the tobacco farm, from 1738 to 1747; and to indemnify them for the expences of the negro trade, for the losses they had sustained during the war, for their giving up the exclusive privilege of the trade to St. Domingo, and for the loss of the ton duty, which had been suspended ever since the year 1731. Yet this compensation has been thought inadequate by some of the proprietors, who have discovered, that ever since the year 1758, upwards of 11,700,000 pounds weight of tobacco have been annually sold in the kingdom at three livres [2s. 6d.] a-pound, though it had been bought for twenty-seven livres [1l. 2s. 6d.] a-hundred.

The nation was of a very different opinion. The directors, who prevailed upon government to acknowledge so large a debt, have been accused of sacrificing the interest of the public to that of a private society. A writer, who in our days should examine whether this accusation were well or ill grounded, would pass for an idle man. Such a discussion would be altogether needless, since every circumstance of this transaction has been made public. It will be sufficient to observe, that it was with the nine millions [375,000l.] a-year, improperly sacrificed by the state,

that the company was enabled to answer the demand of 8,756,065 livres [364,836l. 10d.] with which it was charged, so that the overplus remaining to them amounted to about 244,000 livres [10,166l. 13s. 4d.] of net revenue.

It is true, they had private simple-contract debts to the amount of 74,505,000 livres [3,104,375l.] but they had in trade, in stock, or in debts to call in, 70,733,000 livres [2,947,208l. 6s. 8d.] It will be acknowledged, that beside the difference in the value, there was also some in the nature of the securities. Accordingly, the government must have expected, that it would be obliged to fulfil the engagements of the company. It has, however, saved ten millions of livres [416,666l. 13s. 4d.] the claims of which have been lost, or the claimants themselves have unfortunately perished in the revolutions that happen so frequently in Asia. The losses that have been sustained, respecting what was due to the company in Europe, in America, and in the Indies, have not been much more considerable; and if the isles of France and Bourbon were ever able to pay the 7,106,000 livres [296,089l. 6s. 8d.] they owe, the injury upon this point would not have been of much consequence.

The only wealth of the company consisted, therefore, in moveable and unmoveable effects, to the amount of about twenty millions [833,333l. 6s. 8d.] and in the prospect of the extinction of the life annuities, which in time must bring in three millions [125,000l.] a-year. The actual value of this article might be reckoned equal to a clear capital of thirty millions [1,250,000l.]

Independent of these properties, the company enjoyed some very beneficial rights. The exclusive sale of coffee had been granted them; but as public utility required that an exception should be made in 1736, with regard to coffee imported from the American islands, they obtained, by way of compensation, a yearly sum of 50,000 livres [2083l. 6s. 8d.] which was always duly paid. Even the privilege for Mocha coffee was cancelled in 1767, the government having allowed the importation of that of the Levant. The company obtained no indemnification on this account.

They had experienced a greater loss the year before. In 1720 they had been invested with the sole right of transporting slaves to the American colonies. This system soon

appeared to be erroneous; and it was agreed, that all the merchants in the kingdom should be at liberty to carry on the slave trade, upon condition of adding a pistole [16s. 9d.] per head to the thirteen livres [10s. 10d.] granted out of the royal treasury. Supposing that 15,000 negroes were disposed of every year in the French islands, this made a clear income of 345,000 livres [14,375l.] for the company. This bounty, which was allowed them for a trade they were not concerned in, was taken off in 1767, and was made up to them by a more reasonable equivalent.

At the first formation of the company, they had obtained a gratuity of 50 livres [2l. 1s. 8d.] upon every ton of goods they should export, and of 75 livres [3l. 2s. 6d.] upon every ton they should import from abroad. The ministry, upon the suppression of the bounty upon negroes, increased the gratuity upon every ton exported to 75 livres [3l. 2s. 6d.] and upon every ton imported to 80 [3l. 6s. 8d.] If we rate both at 6000 tons a-year, we shall find a produce of above a million [41,666l. 13s. 4d.] for the company, including the 50,000 livres [2083l. 6s. 8d.] they received upon the coffee.

While the income of the company remained entire, their expences were lessened. By the edict of 1764, the islands of France and Bourbon were become the property of the government, which engaged to fortify and defend them. By this arrangement the company was exonerated of two millions [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] a-year, without the least detriment to the exclusive trade they enjoyed in those two islands.

With all these seemingly-prosperous circumstances, the debts of the company were daily increasing, and it could not possibly have supported itself without the assistance of government. But for sometime past the council of Lewis XV had appeared to be very indifferent about the existence of that great body. At last a decree of council was issued, bearing date the 13th of August 1769, by which the king suspended the exclusive privilege of the India company, and granted to all his subjects the liberty of navigating and trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope. However, in granting this unexpected freedom, the government thought proper to lay it under some restraint. The decree which opens this new tract to private navigators, re-

quires them to provide themselves with passports, which are to be given them gratis by the directors of the India company. It obliges them to make their returns to Port l'Orient, and nowhere else. It establishes a duty by way of indulto on all goods imported from India; which, by a second decree of council, issued on the sixth of September following, was fixed at five per cent. on all goods coming from India and China, and at three per cent. upon all commodities of the growth of the islands of France and Bourbon.

The company lose all hopes of reviving their trade, and cede all their effects to government. THE decree of the 13th of August, by only suspending the privilege of the company, seemed to leave to the proprietors the power of resuming it: but as they saw no probability of ever being able to do this, they wisely determined to liquidate their concerns in such a manner, as to secure their creditors, and the remains of their own fortunes.

For this purpose they offered to give up to the king all the company's ships, thirty in number; all the warehouses and other buildings belonging to them at Port l'Orient and in India; the property of their factories, with the manufactures dependent on them; all naval and military stores; and, lastly, two thousand four hundred and fifty slaves which they had in the islands. All these articles were valued at thirty millions [1,250,000l.] by the proprietors, who at the same time demanded the payment of 16,500,000 livres [687,500l.] which were due to them by the government.

The king agreed to the proposal, but chose to lessen the purchase-money: not that the effects were not of still greater value while they remained in the hands of the company; but being made over to the government, they brought an additional encumbrance upon it. So that, instead of 46,500,000 livres, [1,937,500l.] which the proprietors demanded, the prince, to clear all accounts with them, created a perpetual annuity for their benefit, of 1,200,000 livres [50,000l.] upon a capital of thirty millions [1,250,000l.] The edict for that purpose was issued in January 1770.

This new contract the company mortgaged for twelve millions [458,333l. 6s. 8d.] which they borrowed upon life

annuities at ten per cent. and by a lottery in February following. This money was borrowed to enable them to fulfil the engagements they had entered into when they undertook the last expeditions : but it was insufficient : so that, finding themselves utterly unable to raise more, the proprietors, at their meeting on the 7th April 1770, made over their whole property to the king, except the capital that had been mortgaged to the proprietors of the shares.

The principal articles comprised in this cession, consisted in the abolition of 4,200,000 livres [175,000*l.*] in life annuities ; in that part of the contract of nine millions [375,000*l.*] which exceeded the capital of the shares ; in the hotel of Paris ; in the India goods expected home in 1770 and 1771, supposed to be worth 26,000,000 of livres [1,833,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] and, lastly, in three or four millions [about 150,000*l.* upon an average] of debts, to be called in from debtors either solvent or insolvent, in India, in the isles of France and Bourbon, and at San Domingo. The proprietors engaged at the same time to furnish the king with a sum of 14,768,000 livres [615,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] to be raised by way of a call, which was fixed at 400 livres [16*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] per share. The government, in accepting these several offers, engaged, on their part, to pay all the perpetual and life annuities which the company was bound to pay ; all their other engagements, amounting to about forty-five millions [1,875,000*l.*] all the pensions and half pays granted by the company, amounting to 80,000 livres [3,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] a-year ; and lastly, to stand all the charges and risks attending a liquidation that must necessarily continue some years.

The capital of each share, which, by the edict of August 1764, had been fixed at 1500 livres [66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] bearing an interest of 80 livres [3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] the king now raised to 2500 livres [104*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] bearing an interest of 125 livres [5*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.*] a-year. The new interest was made subject to a deduction of a tenth, and it was agreed that this deduction should be annually appropriated to the paying off the shares by lot, on the footing of their capital of 2500 livres [104*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] so that the interest on the shares thus paid off, would increase the sinking fund till the whole of the shares was finally liquidated.

These respective conditions are recorded in a decree of.

council of the 8th of April, including a report of the deliberations holden the day before in a general meeting of the proprietors, and confirmed by letters patent, bearing date the 22d of the same month. In consequence of these agreements, the call has been paid, a sufficiency for the reimbursement of the shares, to the number of two hundred and twenty, has been taken out every year, and the simple-contract debts of the company have been punctually paid when they became due.

From all these particulars, it is no easy matter to form an idea of the actual mode of existence of the India company, and of the legal state of the trade they carried on. This company, which at present has no property, no business, no object, cannot however be considered as being entirely destroyed, since the proprietors have reserved the joint stock that was mortgaged for their shares; and that they have a common chest, and deputies to superintend their interests. On the other hand, their charter has been suspended; but it is only suspended, and is not included among the articles which the company has ceded to the king. The law by which it was granted is still in force; and the ships that are fitted out for the Indian seas, cannot fail without a permission in the name of the company. So that the freedom which has been granted is but a precarious one; and if the proprietors should offer to resume their trade, with a sufficient stock to carry it on, they would have an undoubted right to do it without any new law to empower them. But except this nominal right, which in fact is much the same as if it did not exist, as the proprietors are not in a condition to exercise it, all their other rights, properties, and factories, are now in the hands of government.

Nevertheless, the voyages to India have been still continued, although the system of policy had not previously paved the way for the free trade that was to succeed the monopoly. If sound principles had been followed, before the new mode of trading had been attempted, it would have been necessary to substitute, insensibly, and by degrees, the private merchants to the company. They should have been enabled to acquire knowledge upon the different branches of a trade with which they were yet unacquainted. They should have been allowed time to form connections in the factories. They should have been encouraged, and as it were, conducted in the first expeditions.

This want of foresight must be one of the principal causes which have retarded the progress of the free trade, and which perhaps have prevented it from being lucrative when it became more extensive: its transactions have been carried on in those factories which were previously occupied by the monopolizing company. Let us take a cursory view of those settlements, beginning with Malabar.

BETWEEN the provinces of Canara and Calicut, lies a district which extends eighteen leagues along the coast, and seven or eight leagues at most in the inland parts. The country, which is very unequal, abounds with pepper and cocoa trees. It is divided into several less districts, subject to as many Indian lords, who are all vassals to the house of Colasry. The head of this bramin family is always to confine his whole attention to what concerns the worship of the gods. It would be beneath his dignity to stoop to profane matters; and the reigns of government are given to his nearest relation. The country is divided into two provinces. In the largest, called the Irouvenate, is the factory of Tellicherry, where the English purchase annually fifteen hundred weight of pepper; and the factory of Cananor, which the Dutch have lately sold for about 250,000 livres [10,416l. 13s. 4d.] because it was an encumbrance to them.

The second province, called Catenate, extends but five leagues along the coast. Here the French were called in by the natives in 1722, with a view to engage them to act against the English; but an accommodation having taken place, and made their assistance unnecessary, they were forced to relinquish a post where they promised themselves some advantages. Fired with resentment and ambition, they returned in greater numbers in 1725, and established themselves, sword in hand, on the mouth of the river Mahé. Notwithstanding this act of violence, they obtained of the prince, who governed that district, an exclusive right to the pepper trade. This favour was so great an advantage to them, that it gave rise to a colony of 6000 Indians, who cultivated 6350 cocoa trees, 3967 areka, and 7762 pepper trees. Such was the state of this settlement, when the English made themselves masters of it in 1760.

The same spirit of destruction that they had shewn in all their conquests, influenced them at Mahé. Their intention was to pull down the houses and disperse the inhabitants. The sovereign of that country dissuaded them from their purpose. All was spared, except the fortifications. When the French returned to their factory, they found every thing much in the same condition as they had left it.

Mahé is surrounded with hills, on which were erected five forts, that no longer exist. These works were too numerous, though some precautions are absolutely necessary. It is not proper to be perpetually exposed to the depredations of the Nayers, who have formerly attempted to plunder and destroy the colony, and who might possibly have still the same intentions, in order to put themselves under the protection of the English at Tellicherry, which is but three miles distant from Mahé.

Beside the posts requisite to secure the place itself, it is very necessary to fortify the entrance of the river. Since the Marattas have got ports of their own, they infest the sea about Malabar with their piracies. Those banditti even attempt to land wherever they think there is some booty to be got. Mahé would not be secure from their attacks, if it contained money or commodities to tempt them.

The French might make themselves ample amends for any expences they should incur, if they did but carry on their trade with spirit and skill. Their factory is the best situated for the pepper trade; and the country would afford 2,500,000 pounds weight of that commodity. What could not be consumed in Europe might be sold in China, on the Red sea, and at Bengal. A pound of pepper would cost them twelve sous [6d.] and they would sell it for twenty-five or thirty [about 1s. 2d. on an average.]

This advantage, considerable as it is, would be increased by the profits upon European goods which would be carried over to Mahé. Those who are best acquainted with that factory are of opinion, that it will be an easy matter to dispose of 400,000 weight of iron, 200,000 of lead, 25,000 of copper, 2000 firelocks, 20,000 weight of gunpowder, 50 anchors or grapplings, 50 bales of cloth, 50,000 ells of sail-cloth, a good quantity of quicksilver, and about 200 casks of wine or brandy, for the French settled in the colony, or for the English in the neighbourhood. These

several articles together would produce at least 384,000 livres [16,000l.] of which 153,600 [6400l.] would be clear gain, allowing the profit to be 40 per cent. Another advantage attending this circulation is, that there would always be a stock in the factory, which would enable them to purchase the productions of the country in the seasons of the year when they are cheapest.

The greatest obstacle to trade is the custom-house established in the colony. This troublesome duty belongs to the sovereign of the country, and has always been a subject of contention. The English of Tellicherry, who laboured under the same grievance; have found means to prevent all disputes about these duties, by paying a certain yearly sum as an equivalent. The French might do the same; but they cannot expect that the prince would agree to it, unless they previously pay him the 46,353 rupees, or 111,247 livres 4 sols [4635l. 6s.] which he has lent; and unless they no longer refuse him the tribute stipulated for the benefit of living peaceably upon his territories. Matters cannot be so easily adjusted at Bengal.

FRANCE has engaged, by the treaty of 1763, to erect no fortifications, and keep no troops, in that rich and extensive country. The English, who are sovereigns there, will not suffer the French to deviate from what they have required. Consequently Chandernagore, which before the last war reckoned 65,000 souls, and has now but 24,000, is, and always will be, entirely an open place.

To this misfortune of a precarious situation, may be added injuries and hardships of every kind. Not satisfied with the possession of unlimited authority, the English have been guilty of the most scandalous enormities. They have insulted the French in their work-shops; seduced their workmen; cut the linens off of the looms; insisted that the manufacturers should do no work but for them in the three best months of the year; and that their own ladings should be picked out and completed before any thing was removed out of the work-shops. The scheme which the French and Dutch had contrived together, of making an exact estimate of the number of weavers, taking only half between them, and leaving the rest to the English, has been

considered as an insult. That ruling nation have proceeded so far as to declare, that they would have their factors buy the goods even in Chandernagore; and the French have been forced to submit to this hardship, or they would have been excluded from every market in Bengal. In a word, they have so much abused the unjust right of victory, that a philosopher might be tempted to wish for the ruin of their liberty, were not the people infinitely more oppressive and cruel under the government of one man, than under a government tempered by the influence of many.

As long as things remain upon the present footing in that opulent part of Asia, the French will meet with perpetual hardships and mortifications, and therefore no solid and lasting advantage can accrue to trade. They would be rescued from this disgrace, if they could exchange Chandernagore for Chatigan.

Chatigan is situated on the confines of Arracan. The Portuguese, who in the days of their prosperity, endeavoured to get all the important posts in India into their own hands, made a considerable establishment at that place. Those who were settled there threw off the yoke of their native country, when it became a part of the Spanish dominions, choosing rather to turn pirates than to be slaves. They long infested the neighbouring coasts and seas with their depredations. At last they were attacked by the moguls, who raised a colony upon their ruins, powerful enough to prevent any inroads which the people of Arracan and Pegu might be tempted to make into Bengal. This place then sunk into obscurity, till 1758, when the English arrived and settled there.

The climate is healthy, the waters excellent, and provisions are in great plenty; the landing is easy, and the anchorage safe. The continent, and the island of Sondiva, make a tolerable harbour. The rivers Barrumputri and Etki, which are branches of the Ganges, or at least communicate with it, greatly facilitate commercial operations. If Chatigan be further distant from Patna, Cassimbuzar, and some other markets, than the European colonies on the river Hughly, it is nearer to Jogdia, Dacca, and all the manufactures of the lower river. It is a matter of no consequence, whether ships of burden can or cannot enter the Ganges on that side, as the inland navigation is never carried on but with boats.

Though the knowledge the English had of these advantages had determined them to seize upon Chatigan, we are inclined to think they would have given it up at the last peace, to get rid of the French and remove them from a place which lies too near their own settlements, and which long habit had endeared to them. We even presume, that at Chatigan, the English would have desisted from those conditions they required at Chandernagore, which stamp a disgrace upon the possessors, more detrimental to the schemes of commerce than it is possible to conceive. Trade is a free profession. The sea, the voyages, the risk, and the vicissitudes of fortune, all inspire a love of independence. This gives life and spirit to trade, which, when confined, languishes, and is lost.

The present opportunity is, perhaps, a favourable one, to think of the exchange we propose. The fortifications which the English had begun to erect at Chatigan having been thrown down by frequent earthquakes, they seem to have taken a dislike to a place for which they had shewn some predilection. As to the French, this inconvenience, great as it is, would be preferable to that of living in a defenceless town. It is better to strive against nature than against men, and to be exposed to the shocks of the earth than to the insults of nations. The French, though restrained at Bengal, fortunately meet with some compensation, in having a better situation on the coast of Coromandel.

To the north of that very extensive coast, they possess Yanam, in the province of Rajahmandry. This factory, which has no land belonging to it, and is situated nine miles from the mouth of the river Ingerom, was formerly a very flourishing one. From mistaken motives it was neglected about the year 1748. It would, however, afford goods to the value of 4 or 500,000 livres [from 16,666l. 13s. 4d. to 20,833l. 6s. 8d.] as the cotton manufactures are very considerable in that neighbourhood, and the cottons remarkably fine and good. It has been found by experience to be a good market for disposing of European cloth. The trade of this place would be more lucrative, if they were.

not obliged to share the profit with the English, who have a small settlement within two miles of the French.

The competition is much more detrimental to their interest at Masulipatnam. The French, who formerly were masters of the whole town, but have nothing left now except the factory they had before 1749, cannot possibly contend with the English, who make them pay duty for all their imports and exports, and enjoy besides all the favour in their own trade which sovereignty can command. Things being thus circumstanced, the French confine their dealings to the purchase of some fine handkerchiefs and other callicoes, to the amount of 150,000 livres [625ol.] It is far otherwise at Karical.

This town, situated in the kingdom of Tanjour, on one of the branches of the Coleroon, which will bear ships of 150 tons burden, was ceded to the company in 1738, by a dethroned king, who was in want of protection. Having been restored before he had fulfilled his engagements, he retracted the gift he had made. A nabob attacked the place with his army, and in 1739 gave it up to the French, who were in friendship with him. Soon after this, the ungrateful and perfidious prince was strangled by the intrigues of his uncles; and his successor, who had inherited his enemies with his throne, being desirous of obtaining the friendship of a powerful nation, confirmed them in their possession. The English took the place in 1760, and blew up the fortifications. It was afterwards restored to the French, who returned thither in 1765.

In its present state, Karical is an open place, which may contain 15,000 inhabitants, most of them employed in weaving ordinary handkerchiefs and cottons, for the wear of the natives. The territory belonging to it, which has been considerably increased by the concessions which the king of Tanjour made in 1749, is now once more what it was at first, two leagues in length, and one league in the broadest part. It is composed of fifteen hamlets, of which one only deserves our notice; this is called Tirumale-Ray-enpatnam, and contains no less than 25,000 souls. The inhabitants weave and paint persians that are tolerably fine, fit for Batavia and the Philippine islands. The coolies and mohammedans have small vessels, with which they trade to Ceylon, and along the coast.

France may draw annually from this settlement, two hundred bales of cottons or handkerchiefs fit for Europe, and a large quantity of rice for the subsistence of her other colonies.

All goods bought at Karical, Yanam, and Masulipatnam, are carried to Pondicherry, the chief settlement of the French in India.

This town, which rose from such small beginnings, in time became a great, powerful, and famous city. The streets, which are all straight, and most of them broad, are lined with two rows of trees, which keep them cool even in the heat of day. The most remarkable public edifices are a mosque, two pagodas, two churches, and the governor's house, which is reckoned the most magnificent building in the east. A small citadel had been constructed in the year 1704; but it is of no use, since houses have been allowed to be built all round it. To supply the loss of this defence, three sides of the town had been fortified with a rampart, a ditch, bastions, and a glacis, which was unfinished in some places. The road was defended by some batteries judiciously placed.

The town, which was full a league in circumference, contained 70,000 inhabitants, of which 4000 were Europeans, Mestees, or Topasses. There were at most 10,000 mohammedans; the rest were Indians, 15,000 of whom were christians, and the others of seventeen or eighteen different casts or tribes. Three villages, dependent on the town, might contain 10,000 souls.

Such was the state of the colony, when the English made themselves masters of it in the beginning of the year 1761, utterly destroyed it, and turned out the inhabitants. Others may, perhaps, examine whether the barbarous right of war could justify such enormities. Let us turn away our eyes from so many cruelties committed by a free, magnanimous, and enlightened nation; and consider only the resolution France has taken to restore Pondicherry to its former splendour. Every thing concurs to justify the wisdom of this choice.

This town, like all others on the coast of Coromandel, has no harbour, but it has a much more commodious road. The ships can anchor close to the shore, under the cannon of the fortifications. Its territory, which is three leagues

long and one league broad, is nothing more than a barren sand-bank on the sea coast; but the greatest part is fit for the culture of rice, vegetables, and a root called chayaver, which is used in dying. Two small rivers that cross the country, but are not navigable, afford excellent water for the same purpose, particularly for the blue dye. Three miles from the town is a hill, which rises a hundred toises above the level of the sea, and is a guide to ships at the distance of seven or eight leagues; which is a very considerable advantage upon so flat a coast. At the top of this hill is a very large body of water, that has been collecting for ages, and, after refreshing and fertilizing a spacious territory, flows down to water the grounds about Pondicherry. Lastly, the colony is favourably situated for the reception of provisions and merchandize from the Carnatic, the kingdoms of Mysore and Tanjour.

Such were the important reasons which determined France to rebuild Pondicherry. As soon as her agents appeared on the 11th of April 1765, the unfortunate Indians, who had been dispersed by the calamities of war, and by political intrigues, flocked thither in great numbers. By the beginning of the year 1770, there were 27,000 who had rebuilt their ruined houses. They are all brought up in the idea, that no man can be happy who does not die in the very place where he first saw the light. This prejudice, so pleasing to them, and which it may be so useful to keep up, will undoubtedly make them all return, as soon as the town is inclosed.

This design was set on foot some years after the French had regained possession of the place. No other idea was then entertained with regard to building upon a sandy soil, where the foundations must necessarily be laid in the water, than that of a fortification raised *sur puits*, a very expensive kind of work, and to which there is, as it were, no end. M. Bourcet preferred the erecting of it upon forelands, with a *revêtement* (or outward coating) of no thickness, sloping to two fifths of its height, and supported by a rampart of wet earth, well beat and compacted. These forelands had been formerly employed in the construction of the walls surrounding the place: but the foundation of the walls which supported them had not been laid sufficiently deep to prevent the sinking that would have been pro-

duced by the running off of the sands which might have escaped from under these foundations; an advantage which the new mode of construction was far from having. Upon this bad plan a thousand toises of *revêtement* were raised.

No sooner were the ministry in Europe informed of the defects of these works, than they sent M. Desclaisons, a man distinguished in the corps of engineers by his probity and talents. This skilful engineer did not adopt either the fortifications *sur puits*, or those on forelands with *revêtemens* sloping to two fifths of their height. He began his work in 1770, and completed in seven months an extent of six hundred and thirty-six toises; with ten feet of net masonry above the foundation, which was laid at the lowest point where it was possible to drain off the waters. His masonry was solid, and his *revêtement* constructed according to the rules of the greatest masters.

The spirit of intrigue, which then carried every thing at Versailles, occasioned M. Desclaisons to be recalled, and he was succeeded by the same engineer whose works had so justly been censured. This man had recourse to his former method, although every thing he had done before was already cracked; and he executed a new extent of fortification of eight hundred toises, which fell to pieces in the same manner as the former.

The voice of reason, which will sometimes make itself be heard, prevailed upon the government to apply again to M. Desclaisons in 1775. He was desired to undertake the completion of the works of Pondicherry, but at the same time to keep the fortifications that were already erected. This mode of proceeding was too repugnant to sound principles for him to accede to it; and he judged it indispensably necessary to sacrifice every thing that had been executed contrary to the rules of the art. He demonstrated, that the works erected upon forelands were improper both for defence and duration; that the inclined *revêtemens* could not fail of breaking either horizontally or vertically; that a wall placed before the forelands must necessarily make them decay, and might occasion the sinking and destruction of the *revêtemens* themselves. His opinion was, that it was proper to defend Pondicherry according to the methods practised in Europe; and that an inclosure with simple

bastions and a few out-works was sufficient. The expences of this fortification were to amount to five millions of livres [208,333l. 6s. 8d.] This reasoning, though not controverted, was not acceded to; and the place remained defenceless, or in a state of weakness and ruin, which is every day increasing.

The French factories in India, in their present state, do not produce more than 200,000 livres [8,333l. 6s. 8d.] while they cost more than 2,000,000 of livres [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] every year. This is a very considerable sacrifice, and yet it is less than what is required for the preservation of the isles of France and Bourbon, which are not in so flourishing a state as they were expected to have been.

Isle of Bourbon. Bourbon is 60 miles in length, and 45 in breadth; but nature has rendered useless the greatest part of this extensive space. Three inaccessible peaks, which are 1600 toises high; a dreadful volcano, the environs of which are always burnt up; numberless ravines, of so steep a descent that it is impossible to clear the soil; mountains, the summit of which is constantly arid; coasts in general covered with stones: these are so many natural and unsurmountable obstacles to a cultivation of any extent. Most of the lands, even which can be cultivated, are sloping; and it is not uncommon to see the best-founded expectations frustrated by torrents.

A beautiful sky, a pure air, a delicious climate, and wholesome waters, have, however, collected in the island a population of six thousand three hundred and forty white men, well-made, strong, courageous, and distributed in nine parishes, of which that of St. Dennis is the principal. These men, a few years ago, were celebrated for a spirit of candour, equity, and moderation, worthy of the primitive ages. The war of 1756 produced some little alteration in their character, without affecting materially their morals.

These virtues were the more remarkable, as they sprang up and were maintained in the midst of six-and-twenty thousand one hundred and seventy-five slaves, according to the calculation made in 1776.

At the same period, the colony reckoned seven-and-fifty thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight animals, not one of which was devoted to agriculture. Excepting two thousand eight hundred and ninety-one horses, which were employed

for different purposes, the rest were entirely destined for subsistence.

In this year, the produce of the harvest rose to five millions four hundred and forty-one thousand twenty-five quintals of corn; to three millions one hundred and ninety-one thousand four hundred and forty tons of rice; to twenty-two millions four hundred and sixty-one thousand eight hundred tons of maize; and to two millions five hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred and ninety tons of pulse. Most of these productions were consumed in Bourbon itself; the rest supplied subsistence to the isle of France.

The colony cultivated for the mother-country eight millions four hundred and ninety-three thousand coffee plants, the fruit of which is of the best kind next to that of Arabia. Each of these trees yielded originally near two pounds of coffee. This produce is diminished by three-fourths, since the cultivation has been carried on in an open country, since the planters have been under a necessity of growing their trees in an exhausted soil, and since the insects have attacked them.

The court of Versailles will never attend to the improvement of a colony, where steep shores, and a sea violently agitated, render the navigation always dangerous, and often impracticable. It were rather to be wished that it might be abandoned, because it is a powerful attraction to some men, and to some exertions, which should rather be all concentrated in the isle of France, which is only five-and-thirty leagues distant from it.

ACCORDING to the observations of the Abbé *Present state*
de la Caille, this other possession measures *of the isle of*
thirty-one thousand eight hundred and ninety *France.*
toises in its greatest diameter; twenty-two
thousand one hundred and twenty-four in its greatest
breadth; and four hundred and thirty-two thousand six
hundred and eighty acres of superficies. Numbers of
mountains are to be seen in it; not one of which is more
than four hundred and twenty-four toises high. Although
the soil be in all parts covered with stones of a greater or
less size, so that it cannot be tilled with the plough, but
must be worked with the spade, it is nevertheless fit for
many things. Though more superficial and less fertile

than that of Bourbon, it is more generally susceptible of cultivation.

This island for a long time engaged the speculation, rather than the industry of its possessors; they wasted their time in conjectures concerning the use it might be put to.

Some were inclined to make a mart of it, where all India goods should centre. They were to be brought thither on India bottoms, and then shipped on board French vessels, which were never to go any further. A double advantage evidently arose from this scheme; first, the expences were lessened, as both the pay and maintenance of India sailors is very trifling; and, secondly, the ships crews were better preserved, for these were sometimes destroyed by the length of the voyage alone, and still more frequently by the climate, especially in Arabia and at Bengal. This plan met with no support. It was feared that the company would fall into contempt, unless they displayed, in these distant latitudes, a naval force sufficient to insure respect.

Others, agreeably to a new system which engaged their attention, were of opinion that the inhabitants of the isle of France should be allowed to trade to India, which they had never yet been suffered to do. The supporters of this system maintained, that the proposed freedom would prove an abundant source of wealth to the colony, and consequently to the mother-country. But the island was then in want of both vessels and specie: it had no articles for exportation, nor means of consumption. For all these reasons, the experiment proved unsuccessful, and it was resolved that the island should be entirely confined to agriculture.

This new regulation gave rise to fresh mistakes. Men were sent from the mother-country to the colony, who neither understood husbandry, nor were accustomed to labour. The lands were distributed at a venture, and without distinguishing what was to be cleared from what did not want it. Money was advanced to the planters, not in proportion to their industry, but to the interest they could make with the government. The company, who got cent. per cent. upon the commodities the colony drew from Europe, and fifty per cent. upon those that were sent in from India, required that the produce of the country should be delivered into their warehouses at a very low price. To complete the misfortunes of the colony, the company, who had kept all

the power in their own hands, broke their engagements they had entered into with their subjects, or rather with their slaves.

Under such an administration, no improvements could be expected. Discouragement threw most of the colonists into a state of inaction. Those who had some share of industry remaining, were either in want of the means that lead to prosperity, or were not supported by that strength of mind which enables men to surmount the difficulties always attending upon new settlements. Those who had an opportunity of seeing and observing the agriculture of the isle of France, found it little better than what they had seen among the savages.

In 1764, the government took the colony under its own immediate controul. From that period, to 1776, a population has been successively formed there of six thousand three hundred and eighty-six white men, including two thousand nine hundred and fifty-five soldiers; of eleven hundred and ninety-nine free negroes, and of twenty-five thousand one hundred and fifty-four slaves. The cattle on the island has also been increased to twenty-five thousand three hundred and sixty-seven.

The coffee tree has employed a considerable number of planters; but the hurricanes that have succeeded each other with extreme rapidity, have prevented any advantage being derived from these plantations. The soil itself, which is in general ferruginous and of little depth, seems improper for this culture. It might therefore, with reason be doubted, whether it would succeed here, if even the government had not endeavoured to check it, by the duties that have been laid on the coffee at its going out of the island, and at its entrance in France.

Three sugar plantations have been established, and these are sufficient for the wants of the colony.

No more than forty thousand weight of cotton has yet been gathered. This last commodity is of a good kind, and every thing promises an increase of it.

The camphor, the aloes, the cocoa tree, the agallochum, the sago, the cardamom, the cinnamon tree, and many other vegetables proper to Asia, which have been naturalized in the island, will probably always remain objects of mere curiosity.

Some iron mines had been discovered a long time ; but it has been found necessary to abandon these, because they could not support the competition of those in Europe.

It is well known, that for these two hundred years, the Dutch have been enriching themselves by the sale of cloves and nutmegs. To secure to themselves the exclusive trade of these articles, they have destroyed or enslaved the nation that was in possession of those spices ; and, lest the price of them should fall, even in their own hands, they have rooted up most of the trees, and have frequently burnt the fruit of those they had preserved.

This barbarous avidity, which has so often excited the indignation of other nations, so strongly exasperated Mr. Poivre (who had travelled all over Asia as a naturalist and a philosopher), that he availed himself of the authority he was intrusted with in the isle of France, and sent men into the least-frequented parts of the Moluccas, to search for what avarice had for so long a time withholden from the rest of the world. The labours of those intrepid and sagacious navigators, in whom he had confided, were crowned with success.

On the 27th of June 1770, they brought to the isle of France 450 nutmeg, and 70 clove trees ; 10,000 nutmegs, either growing, or ready to grow ; and a chest of cloves, several of which were sprung up. Two years after this, another importation was made, much more considerable than the former.

Some of these precious plants were carried to the islands of Seychelles, of Bourbon, and of Cayenne ; but the greater part of them remained in the isle of France. All those which were distributed among private persons perished. The care of the most skilful botanists, the most constant attention, and the most considerable expences, could not preserve, even in the king's garden, more than fifty-eight nutmeg, and thirty-eight clove trees. In the month of October 1775, two of these last bore flowers, which were changed into fruit the next year. That which we have seen is small, dry, and meagre. If they are not improved by a long naturalization, the Dutch will only have had a false alarm, and they will remain immutably the masters of the spice trade.

Sound policy has given another destination to the isle of

France. The quantity of corn there must be increased; and the crops of rice extended by a more judicious distribution of the waters: it is equally important to attend to the multiplying of the cattle, and to the improvement of the breed.

These objects of first necessity were for a long time inconsiderable, although it was an easy matter to form pasturages, and although the soil yielded twenty for one. Only a few years ago it was suggested to the government, to buy up, at a good price, all the grain which the planters might have to sell; and at this period the harvests were increased. If this plan be uninterruptedly followed, the colony will soon furnish provisions for its inhabitants, for the navigators that may frequent its roads, and for the armies and fleets which circumstances will sooner or later bring there. Then this island will be what it should, the bulwark of all the settlements which France possesses, or may one day acquire, in the Indies; the centre of all military operations, offensive or defensive, which her interest will oblige her to undertake, or to sustain, in these distant regions.

It is situated in the African seas, just at the entrance of the Indian ocean. Though raised as high as arid or burning coasts, it is temperate and wholesome. As it lies a little out of the common track, its expeditions can be carried on with greater secrecy. Those who wish it was nearer to our continent, do not consider that, if it were so, it would be impossible to pass in a short time from its road to the gulfs in the most distant of these regions, which is an inestimable advantage to a nation that has no sea-port in India.

Great Britain sees, with a jealous eye, her rivals possessed of a settlement where the ruin of her property in Asia may be prepared. At the breaking out of a war, her utmost efforts will certainly be exerted against a colony that threatens her richest treasures. What a misfortune for France, should she suffer herself to be deprived of it!

Yet what have we not to fear, when we see that to this day no care has been taken for the defence of this island; that the means for this purpose have always been wanting, or misapplied; that the court of Versailles, from year to year, has waited for the dispatches of the directors to come to a determination on this point, just as one would wait for

the return of a courier from the frontiers; and that even at the time we are writing, there is still perhaps a dispute, respecting the kind of protection which it is most expedient to adopt for a settlement of this importance.

It is the general opinion of seamen, that the security of the isle of France must depend entirely on the naval forces: but they acknowledge, that these forces cannot fulfil this intention, till they have been sheltered from those hurricanes, so frequent and so terrible, which prevail in these latitudes from the month of December to that of April. A great number of merchantmen have indeed been lost, and whole squadrons have received so much injury, even in Port Louis, the only one to which seamen at present resort, that too much labour cannot be bestowed in guarding against these dreadful events. For a long time, the government paid little attention to this important object. It has at length determined to dig a large harbour in this road, in the comfortable hope that ships of all dimensions may one day find a safe asylum here.

This business cannot be pushed on with too much expedition; but supposing it executed with every possible success, the maritime forces would still be insufficient for the defence of the colony. The state will never subject itself to the expence of maintaining constantly a stationary squadron in these latitudes; and it is possible that the island may be attacked in the absence of the fleet, which may also be destroyed by sickness, or by a storm. Let it be a strong or a weak one, it still runs the risk of being beaten; and even if it were victorious, an opportunity may have been seized of landing troops during the action. These troops would immediately march on to the port, and would make themselves masters of it, as well as of the victorious ships, which might have taken shelter there in order to refit. By this manœuvre, which is a very simple one, a valuable settlement would fall, without striking a blow, into the hands of an enterprising and skilful enemy. These apprehensions, which are well founded, argue the necessity of fortifications.

Some engineers have imagined, that batteries judiciously disposed along the coast, would be sufficient to prevent the besiegers from landing. But since it has been ascertained that the island is accessible to boats in the greatest part of its circumference, that even in several places, a descent could

be effected by force under the protection of the men of war, this plan has been relinquished. It has been understood, that there would be an infinite number of posts to fortify; that the expences would be endless; that too many troops would be wanted; and that the distribution of them would leave every point exposed to the consequence of a landing executed suddenly, or by surprise.

The idea of a war of posts has not been thought a more fortunate one. The isle of France, notwithstanding the advantage of posts, will never collect a sufficient body of troops to resist those which the enemy may bring there. The persons who have proposed this idea, have laid a stress upon the assistance to be obtained from the colonists and the slaves: but they have been obliged at length to acknowledge, that this multitude, which might possibly be of some use behind good ramparts, could be of little or no service in the open field.

The project of building and fortifying a city in the inland parts, has for a long time had its partisans. Such an establishment appeared to them proper to keep the besiegers at a distance from the centre of the colony, and to force them, in time, to relinquish any advantages they might have gained at first. They would not be convinced that without any movement on the part of an enemy, who was become master of the ports and of the coasts, the garrison, deprived of every external communication, would soon be reduced to the necessity of surrendering at discretion, or of perishing with famine. And even if the enemy were to do nothing more than fill up the roads, and destroy the arsenals, magazines, and all the public edifices, would not their principal object be fulfilled? Of what concern would it be then to them, that there should be a fortress and a garrison in the midst of an island, incapable of giving them any uneasiness, or of exciting their jealousy in future?

After so many variations and such uncertainties of opinion, the government has begun to be convinced, that the only method of defending the colony is to provide for the security of its two ports; to establish a communication that shall give rise to internal connections between them; that shall facilitate a ready distribution of the forces according to the designs of the enemy, and that shall make the suc-

cours which might arrive from without, by one or other of its roads, common to both parties.

Port Bourbon, where the Dutch had formed their settlement, and Port Louis, the only one to which the French resort, had not hitherto appeared capable of being fortified: the first, on account of its vast extent, the latter, on account of the irregular heights which surround it. But the Chevalier d'Arçon has proposed a plan which has removed all these difficulties, and which, after the fullest discussion, has obtained the approbation of those who are the best acquainted with this important art. The expences attending the execution of this great project have been rigidly calculated, and it is affirmed that they will not be considerable.

But what number of troops will be wanted to defend these fortifications? The skilful engineer usually requires but few. He is well aware, that if many were to be sent, they would soon grow effeminate by the heat of the climate, become corrupt by the desire and expectation of gain, ruined by debauchery, and enervated by idleness. Accordingly, he has reduced them in time of peace to two thousand men, who will be easily restrained, exercised, and disciplined. This number appears to him sufficient to resist any sudden or unexpected attack that might fall on the colony. If it were threatened with extraordinary danger from great preparations, a minister, attentive to the storms that are gathering, would have time enough to send over the forces necessary to defend it, or to act in Indostan according to circumstances.

Some persons will disapprove of these views. The isle of France costs the state annually eight millions of livres [333,333l. 6s. 8d.] This expence, which will scarce admit of any reduction, excites the indignation of many good citizens. Their wish is, that this settlement should be abandoned as well as Bourbon, which is only a burdensome appendage to it.

This indeed would be the scheme most expedient to be adopted, if we considered only the languishing trade now carried on by the French in India. But political speculations reach beyond this object. It is foreseen, that if this resolution were adhered to, the English would drive all foreign nations from the Asiatic seas; that they would appropriate to themselves all the riches of these extensive re-

gions; and that so many powerful resources united in their hands would give them a dangerous influence in Europe. These considerations ought still more fully to convince the court of Versailles of the necessity of fortifying the isle of France; at the same time taking the most effectual precautions not to be imposed upon by the agents chosen to carry this point into execution.

However, there is so necessary a connection between the isle of France and Pondicherry, that those two possessions are entirely dependent on each other; for, without the isle of France, there would be no protection for the settlements in India; and, without Pondicherry, the isle of France would be exposed to the invasion of the English from Asia, as well as from Europe.

The isle of France and Pondicherry, when considered as having a necessary and mutual connection, will be a security to one another. Pondicherry will protect the isle of France, as being the rival of Madras, which the English must always cover with their land and sea forces; and, on the other hand, the isle of France will always be ready to succour Pondicherry, or to act offensively, as circumstances shall require.

From these principles it appears how requisite it is, after having fortified the isle of France, to put Pondicherry immediately in a state of defence. This place will become the necessary staple of all the trade carried on with India, as well as a deposit of all the troops and provisions that will be sent there. It will also serve to protect a small force, when offensive measures are pursued.

When the isle of France and Pondicherry are once put in a proper posture of defence, the court of Versailles will no longer scruple to afford the merchants that protection which the sovereign owes to his subjects, throughout the whole of his dominions. The British ministry, on their parts, will be more fully convinced, than they have hitherto appeared to be, of the necessity of restraining the English traders within the bounds of moderation and justice. But will the English company be made to give up the abuse of power, and to renounce those loose principles which their astonishing success has inspired them with? This cannot be expected. Their resistance would produce acrimony: the

interests of the two nations would clash, and war would ensue.

Far be it from us to suggest any idea that would tend to rekindle the flames of discord. Rather let the voice of reason and philosophy be heard by the rulers of the world. May all sovereigns, after so many ages of error, learn to prefer the virtuous glory of making a few men happy, to the mad ambition of reigning over wasted regions, and people groaning under the weight of oppression! May all men become brethren, accustom themselves to consider the universe as one family under the eye of one common father! But these wishes, which are those of every enlightened and humane man, will appear as idle dreams to ambitious ministers, who hold the reins of empire. Their busy and restless disposition will still shed torrents of blood.

Some pitiful commercial interest will again arm the French and the English. Though Great Britain, in most of her wars, has aimed chiefly at destroying the industry of her neighbours; and though the superiority of her naval forces may still keep up the hope, so often disappointed, of effecting this; yet we may safely foretel that she would choose to remove the scene of action from the seas of Asia, where she would have so little to gain, and so much to lose. That power is not ignorant of the secret wishes formed on all sides for the overthrow of an edifice which eclipses all the rest. The subah of Bengal is secretly exasperated that he has not even the appearance of authority left. The subah of the Decan is inconsolable to see his commerce under the controul of a foreign power. The nabob of Arcot endeavours to dispel the jealousies of his tyrants. The Marattas are exasperated to find perpetual obstacles to their depredations. All the powers of these countries are either actually enslaved, or think themselves on the eve of being so. England, we may presume, would not wish to see the French at the head of such a confederacy. On the contrary, we may venture to foretel, that a strict neutrality for India would be the wisest plan they could pursue, and the one they would most readily adopt.

But would this system be as eligible for their rivals? Certainly not. The French are aware, that warlike preparations made at the isle of France might be employed with advantage; that the conquests of the English are too

extensive not to be open to attacks ; and that, since their experienced officers are returned home, the British possessions in Indostan are only defended by young men, more intent upon making their fortunes than upon military exercises. It is therefore to be presumed, that a warlike nation would eagerly seize an opportunity of repairing their former disasters. At the sight of their standards, all these oppressed sovereigns would take the field ; and the rulers of India, surrounded with enemies, and attacked at once on the north and on the south, by sea and by land, would infallibly be overpowered.

THEN the French, considered as the deliverers of Indostan, would emerge from that state of humiliation into which their own misconduct hath plunged them.

Principles which the French ought to pursue in India.

They would become the idols of the princes and people of Asia, provided the revolution brought about by them should prove a lesson of moderation. Their trade would be extensive and flourishing, so long as they knew how to be just. But this prosperity would end in some fatal catastrophe, should an inordinate ambition prompt them to plunder, ravage, and oppress. They would then, in their turn, share the same fate as their extravagant and cruel rivals whom they had reduced.

To conquer, or to plunder with violence, is the same thing. The plunderer and the violent man are always objects of detestation.

Perhaps it may be true, that great riches are not to be rapidly acquired without great injustice ; but it is not less true, that an unjust man is universally hated ; and it is a matter of uncertainty, whether the wealth he hath gained will indemnify him for the odium he hath incurred.

There is not any one nation that is not jealous of the prosperity of another. Why must this jealousy be perpetuated notwithstanding the experience of its fatal consequences ?

There is but one lawful mode of obtaining a superiority over our competitors : this is, mildness in administration ; faithful observance of engagements ; the having goods of a better quality, and the being satisfied with a moderate profit. Why should we have recourse to other measures,

pected of the slightest extortion, be instantly recalled. When venality is proved, punish it upon the spot, that there may be no temptation on one part to offer what it would be infamous on the other to receive.

Every thing is lost, while your agents are only protected persons, or men of bad fame; the former, who are intent only upon repairing their fortunes, by plundering at a distance; the latter who come to hide their ignominy in your counting-houses and factories. There is no integrity so confirmed, as to be exposed to cross the line without risk of being tainted.

If ye are just and humane, people will remain with you; they will do more; they will even quit distant countries to come and reside among you.

Appoint some days of rest; and institute some festivals, but let them be merely of a civil nature. You will be ever blest indeed, if the most cheerful of these festivals shall be celebrated in commemoration of your first arrival in the country.

Be faithful to the treaties you have concluded. Let your ally find an advantage in them, which is the only legitimate guarantee of their duration. If I be injured, either by my own ignorance, or by your cunning, vain is the oath I have taken; heaven and earth will release me from it.

As long as ye shall separate the good of the nation that has received you, from your own advantage, ye will be oppressors and tyrants; and it is by the title of benefactors alone that we can conciliate affection.

If the man who dwells near you should bury his gold, you may be assured that he curses you.

To what purpose is it that ye oppose a revolution, which, though distant, will certainly be accomplished, notwithstanding all your efforts to prevent it? The world that you have invaded must free itself from that which you inhabit. Then the seas will only separate friends and brothers. What great calamity do you see in this, ye unjust, cruel, and inflexible tyrants?

The edifice of wisdom is not eternal: but that of folly is continually tottering, and soon falls to pieces. Wisdom imprints its lasting characters upon the rocks; folly traces

hers on the sand. Settlements have been formed and subverted; ruins have been heaped on ruins; countries that were well peopled have become desert; ports that were full of buildings have been abandoned; vast tracts that had been ill cemented with blood have separated, and have brought to view the bones of murderers and of tyrants confounded with each other. It seems as if from one region to another prosperity had been pursued by an evil genius which speaks our several languages, and which diffuses the same calamities in all parts.

Let our first victims no longer feel themselves avenged, and rejoice at sight of the rage we are continually exerting against each other. May these ideas, thrown out without art, and as they presented themselves to my mind, make a deep and lasting impression! May it please heaven, that henceforth I should have nothing but your moderation and wisdom to celebrate: for it is agreeable to me to praise, and painful to censure. Let us now examine what has been the conduct of the northern powers, in endeavouring to share in the commerce of Asia: for the spirit of luxury, penetrating also into these regions of iron and ice, has made the inhabitants covet the riches and the enjoyments of other nations.

BOOK V.

TRADE OF DENMARK, OSTEND, SWEDEN, PRUSSIA, SPAIN,
AND RUSSIA, TO THE EAST INDIES. SOME IMPORTANT
INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE CONNECTIONS OF EUROPE
WITH INDIA.

THE most powerful nations, as well as the largest rivers, have been insignificant in their origin. It would be difficult to produce one single instance of a nation, since

the creation of the world, that has either extended or enriched itself, during a long interval of tranquillity, by the progress of industry alone, or by the mere resources of its population. Nature, which makes vultures and doves, creates also that ferocious band, that is one day to rush upon the peaceful society which has been formed in its neighbourhood, or which it may meet with in its wandering incursions. The purity of blood among nations, if we may be allowed the expression, as well as the purity of blood among families, cannot be more than temporary, unless kept up by whimsical or religious institutions. A mixture is the necessary result of an infinite number of causes; and from this mixture a race universally springs up, which is either improved or degenerated, according as the character and manners of the conqueror have adapted themselves to the character and manners of the conquered; or as the character and manners of the conquered people have given way to those of the conqueror. Among the various causes which soonest bring about this intermixture, that which presents itself as the primary and principal one, is emigration; more or less excited by the barrenness of the soil, and the disagreeableness of the residence. If the eagle were to find an easy subsistence among the desert rocks that have been witness to his birth, his rapid flight would never have carried him, with his bill half open, and his claws extended, against the innocent cattle that feed at the foot of his craggy asylum. But what does this ravenous and warlike bird do, after he has seized his prey? He repairs anew to the summit of his rock, from whence he only descends when he is again solicited by want. It is in the same manner that the savage treats his civilized neighbour; and his plunder would be perpetual, if nature had not placed between the inhabitant of one region and that of another, between the man of the mountain, and the man who dwells in the valley or among the fens, the same barrier that separates the different species of animals,

Ancient revolutions in Denmark.

It is the general opinion, that, in the earliest times, a people called the Cimbri possessed, at the extremity of Germania, the Cimbrian Chersonesus, now known by the name of Holstein, Sleswic and Jutland; and that

the Teutones lived in the adjacent islands. Whether these people had, or had not, a common origin, it is certain, that they came out of their forests, or out of their marshes, in a collective body, and as one nation, and penetrated among the Gauls, in quest of plunder, glory, and a milder climate. They were even preparing to cross the Alps, when Rome judged it necessary to stem a torrent which carried all before it. Those barbarians triumphed over all the generals that proud republic sent to oppose them, till the memorable era when they were totally defeated by Marius.

Their country, which became almost a desert after that terrible catastrophe, was peopled again by the Scythians, who, being driven by Pompey out of that vast space between the Euxine and the Caspian sea, marched towards the north and west of Europe, subduing all the nations they found in their way. They conquered Russia, Saxony, Westphalia, the Cimbrian Chersonesus, and the countries as far as Finland, Norway, and Sweden. It is pretended that Wodin, their leader, traversed so many countries, and endeavoured to subdue them, only with a view to stimulate the people against the formidable, odious, and tyrannical power of the Romans. That spirit of animosity, which he had excited in the north, operated secretly with so much force after his death, that in a few centuries all nations agreed to turn their arms against that empire, the declared enemy of all liberty; and, after having shaken it by repeated attacks, were at length successful enough totally to subvert it.

Denmark and Norway remained without inhabitants after these glorious expeditions. By insensible degrees they recovered their former state, and began to be of some consequence again towards the beginning of the eighth century. Their valour now exerted itself, not on land, but on the ocean. Surrounded as they were by two seas, they commenced pirates, which is always the first step towards navigation in uncivilised nations.

They first made trial of their strength against the neighbouring states, and seized the few merchant ships they found sailing up and down the Baltic. Emboldened by these successes, they were enabled to plan more considerable undertakings. They infested the seas and coasts of Scotland, Ireland, England, Flanders, France, and even of Spain.

Italy, and Greece. They frequently penetrated into the inland parts of those extensive countries, and even ventured upon the conquest of Normandy and England. Notwithstanding the confusion that reigns in the annals of those barbarous times, we may still trace some of the causes of so many extraordinary events.

The inhabitants of Denmark and Norway had originally a strong propensity to piracy, which has always been observed in people bordering upon the sea, when they are not restrained by civilization and good laws. Custom must necessarily have made the ocean familiar to them, and inured them to its storms. Having no agriculture, breeding but few cattle, and finding but a scanty resource from the chase, in a country covered with ice and snow, they could have no strong attachment to their native land. The facility with which they built their ships, which were nothing more than rafts coarsely put together for the purpose of sailing along the coasts, enabled them to go to all parts, to land their forces, to plunder, and to reimbarc. Piracy was to them, what it had been to the first heroes of Greece the road to glory and fortune; an honourable profession, which consisted in a contempt of all danger. This idea inspired them with invincible courage in their expeditions, sometimes carried on under the joint command of different chiefs, and sometimes divided into as many armaments as nations. These sudden attacks, made in a variety of places at the same time, left only to the inhabitants of the coasts, which were but ill defended, in consequence of their being under a bad government, the dreadful alternative either of being massacred, or giving up all their property to redeem their lives.

This propensity to plunder was a natural consequence of the savage life of the Danes and Norwegians, and of the rough and military education they received; but it was more particularly the effect of the religion of Wodin. That victorious impostor improved, if we may be allowed to say so, the natural fierceness of those nations by his sanguinary tenets. He ordered that all the implements of war, such as swords, axes, and lances, should be deified. The most sacred engagements were confirmed by these instruments which they so highly valued. A lance set up in the middle of a plain, was the signal for prayer and sacri-

fice. Wodin himself at his death was ranked among the immortal gods, and was the first deity of those horrid regions, where the rocks and woods were stained and consecrated with human blood. His followers thought they honoured him by calling him the god of armies, the father of slaughter, the destroyer of mankind, the promoter of discord. The warriors, when they went to battle, made a vow to send him a certain number of souls, which they devoted to him. These souls were the right of Wodin. It was the general belief, that he appeared in every battle, either to protect those who fought valiantly, or to mark out the happy victims he reserved for himself; that these followed him to the regions of bliss, which were open to none but warriors. The people ran to death, and to martyrdom, to obtain this reward. This belief increased their natural propensity to war, till it grew to enthusiasm, and to a religious thirst for blood.

Christianity overthrew all the ideas resulting from such a system. Its missionaries endeavoured to bring their profelytes to a sedentary life, that they might be fit to receive their instructions. They gave them a disgust for their roving life, by suggesting to them other means of subsistence. They were so fortunate as to inspire them with a love of agriculture, and more especially of fishing. The great plenty of herrings, which then came in shoals to their coasts, afforded them an easy means of procuring food. When they had set apart a sufficient quantity of these fish for their own use, in order to preserve it, they bartered the remainder for salt. This intercourse was encouraged at its rise by one common faith, new prospects, mutual wants, and great security. Such a total revolution ensued, that, since the conversion of the Danes and Norwegians, not a single instance is to be found in history of their expeditions and depredations.

The new spirit, which seemed to animate Norway and Denmark, could not fail of extending their communication with the other nations of Europe. Unfortunately it was intercepted by the ascendant which the Hanse towns had acquired. Even when that great and singular confederacy fell into decay, Hamburgh still maintained the superiority it had obtained over all the subjects of the Danish dominions. They were beginning to break the bands that had

subjected them to this kind of monopoly, when they were induced to undertake the navigation to the East Indies by an incident that deserves to be noticed.

Denmark begins to carry on a trade with India. A Dutch factor, named Boschower, being sent by his nation to conclude a treaty of commerce with the king of Ceylon, so ingratiated himself with that monarch, that he became chief of his council, his admiral, and was created prince of Mingone. Boschower, intoxicated with these honours, hastened to Europe, to make a parade of them before his countrymen. He took great offence at the coldness with which those republicans received the titled slave of an Asiatic court; and was so highly provoked at it, that he went over to Christiern IV, king of Denmark, and offered him his services, and the interest he had at Ceylon. His proposals were accepted. He sailed in 1618, with six ships, three of which belonged to the government, and three to the company that had associated themselves to carry on a trade to India. His death, which happened in their passage, put an end to the hopes they had conceived. The Danes met with a very bad reception at Ceylon; and their chief, Ove Giedde de Tommerup, saw no other resource than to carry them to Tanjour, a part of the continent nearest to that island.

Tanjour is a small state, which is but a hundred miles in its greatest length, and eighty in its greatest breadth. It is of all that coast the province that bears the greatest quantity of rice. This natural wealth, added to a variety of useful manufactures, and a great plenty of roots for dying, makes the public revenue amount to near five millions of livres [208,333l. 6s. 8d.] Its fertility is owing to its being watered by the Caveri, a river which comes down from the mountains of Gate. At upwards of four hundred miles from the head, it divides into two streams. At the entrance of Tanjour, the eastern branch takes the name of Coleroon. The other retains the name of Caveri, and subdivides again into four branches, which all flow within the kingdom, and preserve it from that terrible drought which burns up the rest of Coromandel for the greatest part of the year.

• This happy situation made the Danes wish to form a set-

tlement in Tanjour. Their proposals met with a favourable reception. They obtained a fruitful and populous territory ; on which they built Tranquebar, and afterwards the fortrefs of Dannebourg, fufficient for the defence both of the road and the town. On their part, they engaged to pay an annual homage of two thousand pagodas, or sixteen thousand eight hundred livres [700l.] which is continued to this time.

Circumstances were favourable for establishing a large commerce. The Portuguese, who groaned under the oppression of a foreign yoke, made only feeble efforts to preserve their possessions ; the Spaniards sent no ships but to the Molucca and Philippine islands ; and the Dutch were solely intent upon engrossing the spice trade. The English felt the effects of the disturbances their country laboured under, even in India. All these powers could not see this new rival without regret, but none opposed it.

In consequence of this, the Danes, who began with a capital of no more than 853,263 livres [35,532l. 12s. 6d.] carried on rather a considerable trade in all parts of India. Unfortunately the Dutch company acquired such a superiority, as to exclude them from the markets where they had traded most advantageously ; and, by a still greater misfortune, the dissensions that rent the north of Europe, would not permit the mother-country to attend to such remote concerns as those of this settlement. The Danes at Tranquebar insensibly fell into contempt, both with the natives, who value men only in proportion to their riches, and with the rival nations, whose competition they could not sustain. They were discouraged by this inferiority ; and the company gave up its charter, and made over its settlements to the government, as an indemnification for the sums it had advanced.

A new company was formed in 1670 upon the ruins of the old one. Christian V gave them, in ships and other effects, to the value of three hundred and ten thousand eight hundred and twenty-eight livres ten sous [12,951l. 3s. 9d.] and the adventurers advanced seven hundred and thirty-two thousand six hundred livres [30,525l.] This second undertaking, which

*Changes the
Danish trade
has undergone
in India.*

was entered upon without a sufficient fund, proved still more unsuccessful than the first. After a few voyages, the factory of Tranquebar was left to itself. Their small territory, and two vessels that they freighted for the merchants of that country, were the only means they had to supply the inhabitants and their garrison. These resources sometimes failed them; and, to save themselves from the effects of famine, they were reduced to mortgage three of the four bastions that constituted their fortrefs. They were scarce able to fit out a ship for Europe once in three years with a very moderate cargo.

Pity seemed to be the only sentiment that so desperate a situation could inspire. But the ever-watchful jealousy and suspicious avarice of other nations, stirred up an odious war against the Danes. The raja of Tanjour, who had frequently intercepted their communication with his territory, attacked them in 1689, in the very town of Tranquebar, at the instigation of the Dutch. That prince had nearly taken the places after a six month siege, when it was succoured and saved by the English. This event neither was, nor could be, attended with any important consequences. The Danish company declined daily, and was at length annihilated in 1730, but not till after it had become bankrupt.

Two years after this, a new company was formed. The favours that were heaped upon it, to enable it to carry on a free and advantageous trade, plainly shew of what importance this commerce appeared to the government. The charter of the company was settled for forty years. Whatever belonged to the fitting out of their ships was exempted from all duties. The workmen they employed, whether natives or foreigners, were not tied down to the regulations of particular companies, which were a restraint upon industry in Denmark, as well as in other countries of Europe. They were not obliged to use stamped paper in their transactions. They had an absolute jurisdiction over the persons they employed; and the sentences passed by the directors were not liable to be reversed, unless the punishment were capital. To remove even the appearance of constraint, the sovereign renounced the right he had of interfering in the administration of their affairs, as being chief proprietor. He retained no influence in the choice of officers, whether civil or military, and only reserved to himself a power o.

confirming the office of governor of Tranquebar. He even bound himself to ratify all political conventions they might think proper to make with the Asiatic powers.

In return for so many indulgencies, government only required one per cent. upon all merchandize of India and China which should be sent abroad, and two and a half per cent. upon all that should be consumed at home.

The grant containing the above conditions was no sooner confirmed, than it became necessary to find adventurers. This was a difficult point; for the trade to India had hitherto proved so unsuccessful, that men of property must have been totally averse from engaging their fortunes in it. A new idea was suggested to alter this disposition. The stock was distinguished into two different kinds. The first, called *fixed*, was that in which all the effects the old company had in Europe and Asia were destined to be vested, the other stock was called *variable*, because every year it was regulated by the number and the cargoes of the ships that should be fitted out. Every proprietor might choose whether he would be concerned in these expeditions, the profits of which were settled at the close of every voyage. By this arrangement, the company became permanent by the fixed, and annual by the variable, stock.

It seemed a difficult matter to state the share of expence that each of these funds was to bear. Every thing was settled with more ease than had been expected. It was agreed that the variable stock should only pay the necessary expences for the purchase, the fitting out, and the cargoes of the ships. All other charges were to be defrayed from the fixed stock, which, by way of compensation, was to take up ten per cent. upon all India goods which should be sold in Europe, and five per cent. upon all that should be sent out from Tranquebar.

The capital of the new company amounted to 3,240,000 livres [135,000*l.*] divided into sixteen hundred shares, of 2025 livres [84*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*] each.

With these funds, which were always in circulation, the proprietors, during the forty years of their charter, fitted out eight hundred ships. The expence of these vessels in money rose to 87,333,637 livres ten sols [3,638,901*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.*] and in merchandize, to 10,580,094 livres [440,837*l.* 5*s.*] which in the whole made 97,913,731 livres 10 sols

[4,079,850*l.*] The returns were sold for 188,939,673 livres [7,872,486*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*] Of this Denmark only consumed 35,450,262 livres [1,477,094*l.* 5*s.*] therefore the value of 153,489,411 livres [6,313,392*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*] of it was exported. Let us make a fresh division, and we shall find, that the annual sales have amounted to the sum of 4,723,491 livres 16 sols [196,812*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*] that of this, the country has only consumed annually to the value of 886,250 livres 10 sols [36,927*l.* 2*s.* 1*d.*] and that foreign nations have carried off to the amount of 3,837,235 livres 10 sols [159,884*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*]

The dividends were very irregular, during all the time that the charter lasted. They would have been more considerable, if part of the profits had not been constantly appropriated to the extension of the trade. By this prudent and considerate conduct, the fortunate proprietors trebled their capitals. Their stock would have been increased with the additional sum of 2,000,000 of livres [83,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] if in 1754, the Danish ministry had not prevailed upon the directors to erect a statue to king Frederick V.

When I reflect upon these public monuments consecrated to a sovereign in his life time, his want of modesty always occurs to my mind. When a prince orders them himself, it seems as if he said to his people, "I am a great man; I am a great king. It is impossible for me to present myself every day to your view, and to receive the splendid testimony of your admiration and affection. But here is my image. Get round it, and satisfy yourselves. When I shall be no more, you will conduct your child to the foot of my statue, and you will say to him,—Behold, my son, and consider him attentively. This is the man who repulsed the enemies of the state, who commanded its armies in person; who paid the debts of his ancestors; who fertilized our fields; who protected our farmers; who laid no restraint upon our conscience; who permitted us to live in happiness, freedom, and opulence; let his name for ever be blest!"

What insolent vanity is this, even if it be true! What impudence if it be not! But how few would there be of these monuments, had they only been erected to princes who deserved them? If all the others were taken down, how few would remain? If truth had dictated the inscriptions

that are placed around them, what should we read? "To Nero, after he had assassinated his mother, killed his wife, slain his preceptor, and imbrued his hands in the blood of the most worthy citizens." You shudder with horror. Alas! vile people, why am I not allowed to substitute true inscriptions in the place of those with which you have decorated the monuments of your sovereigns. You would not read of the same crimes; but you would read of others, and you would shudder again.

Here I would write, as formerly, upon Pompey's column: "To Pompey, after he had massacred three millions of men." There I would write—Base mortals, are you then afraid that your masters should blush for their wickedness? When you pay them such homage, how is it possible they should think that you are unhappy? How should they not imagine that they are the idols of your hearts, when, by your acclamations, you give your approbation to the servility of the courtiers?

"But the people will answer, "These monuments are not erected by us. We should never have thought of conferring the honour of a statue on a tyrant who kept us plunged in misery, and to whom our profound silence, when he passed through our city in person, so frequently announced the indignation we felt. It cannot be imagined that we should have been so mad, after he had exhausted us nearly of all our means of subsistence, to throw away the few we had still remaining upon a cast."

Monarchs, if ye are good, ye may be assured of the statue which ye raise to yourselves. The nation, whose happiness you have created, will grant it to you a century after your death, when your actions shall have been tried at the tribunal of history. If ye are bad and vicious, you only perpetuate the memory of your wickedness and your vices. The sovereign, who is possessed of any degree of dignity, will wait. He who is possessed of true greatness of soul, would perhaps disdain a species of incense indiscriminately bestowed in all ages upon vice and virtue. While the inscription was engraving round his statue, TO THE MOST HIGH, MOST WORTHY, MOST PUISSANT, MOST GLORIOUS, MOST MAGNIFICENT PRINCE, &c. he would recollect, that the same titles were engraved under the statue of a Tiberius, a Domitian, or a Caligula; and he would exclaim with a

worthy Roman, " Spare me a homage that is too suspicious. Let me have no tainted honours. My temple is in your hearts. There it is that my image is beautiful, and that it will last."

And, indeed, with whatever solidity monuments may be constructed, sooner or later the hand of time strikes and overturns them. On the contrary, the edge of his scythe is blunted against the page of history. It can have no effect upon the heart, or upon the memory of man. His veneration is transmitted from age to age; and succeeding centuries are perpetually repeating it. Proud waters of the Seine, swell yourselves if you dare: ye may sweep away our bridges, and even the statue of Henry; but his name will remain. It is before the image of this great king that the people, impressed with tender sentiments, and the stranger, stop. If the other monuments, sovereigns! that are consecrated to you, are also visited, do not mistake the intention. Men do not come to honour your persons; they come to admire the workmanship of the art; regretting, at the same time, that so sublime a talent, which should devote itself to virtue, should be so meanly prostituted to vice. At the foot of your statue, what can the citizen or the stranger think, when he sees himself surrounded by a set of wretches whose aspect discovers their misery, and whose plaintive accents solicit a trifling assistance? Is it not, as if they said to him: **BEHOLD AND RELIEVE THE DISTRESS WHICH THIS MAN OF BRONZE HAS BROUGHT UPON US?** Erect statues to the great men of your nation, and yours will be looked for among them. But in countries submitted to tyranny there is but one man and one statue. There, the bronze speaks, and the marble exclaims,—**PEOPLE, LEARN THAT I AM ALL, AND THAT YOU ARE NOTHING.** Let me be excused for this digression. The fate of a writer would be too hard, if he were not sometimes allowed to give way to the sentiment that oppresses him.

Present State of the Danes in India.

When the charter of the company expired on the 12th of April 1772, a new one was given them, but only for twenty years. Some restraints were also laid upon the favours they had before enjoyed.

Excepting the trade to China, which still continues exclusive, the Indian seas are open to all the citizens, and to others who wish to share in their undertakings. But in order to be entitled to this liberty, it is necessary to employ no ships but what are built in one of the ports of the kingdom; to embark upon each vessel to the value of thirteen thousand five hundred livres [562l. 10s.] at least, in merchandize of the national manufacture; to pay to the company sixty-seven livres ten sols [2l. 16s. 3d.] per last, or two per cent. of the value of the cargo upon its going out, and eight per cent. at its return. Individuals are also allowed to trade from one part of India to another, by paying a duty of entrance of four per cent. on the productions of Asia, and two per cent. on those of Europe, in all the Danish settlements. If the court of Copenhagen, as there can be no doubt, have made these arrangements only with a view of encouraging their factories, experience must have convinced them of their mistake.

The company was formerly exempt from the duties settled upon all articles employed in the building and victualling of ships. They have been deprived of an exemption which was attended with too many inconveniences. They receive as an indemnity, sixty-seven livres ten sols [2l. 16s. 3d.] per last, and thirteen livres ten sols [11s. 3d.] for each of the persons composing the crews of their ships. On the other hand, they are obliged to export upon each of their vessels dispatched to India to the value of thirteen thousand five hundred livres [562l. 10s.] of mercantile articles fabricated in the kingdom; and to the amount of eighteen thousand livres [750l.] upon each of the ships destined for China.

The customs fixed for the productions of Asia which were consumed in Denmark, or sent to other parts, and which were formerly different, are at present equal. They all of them pay two per cent. without any regard to the place of their destination. The government has also reserved to itself the privilege of being the arbiter of the customs, which the silks and coffees, destined for the state, should be obliged to pay. This restriction is intended to favour the interest of the American islands, and of the national manufactures.

The king has given up the practice he had of placing

annually, in the company's trade, the sum of about one hundred thousand livres [4166l. 13s. 4d.] from which he usually derived a benefit of twenty per cent. To indemnify him for this sacrifice, when the company fit out but one ship, they will add to his private chest twenty-two thousand five hundred livres [937l. 10s.] when they send two, they will pay him thirty-six thousand livres [1500l.] and forty-five thousand livres [1875l.] when they dispatch three, or a greater number.

Under the former administration, a proprietor of one share was intitled to vote at the general meetings. Three shares carried two votes, five shares three, and so on in the same proportion to twelve votes, which number no proprietor could ever go beyond, whatever interest he might have in the stocks of the company. But the votes of absentees or foreigners were admitted upon producing a power of attorney from them. The consequence of this practice was, that a few merchants residing at Copenhagen were the rulers of all their deliberations. This evil has been remedied, by reducing the number of votes any one proprietor may have, either for himself or by proxy, to three.

Such are the new views which distinguish the late charter from those that have preceded it. The example of the ministry has influenced the conduct of the proprietors, who have also made some remarkable alterations in their administration.

The distinction established between the fixed and the variable stock reduced the company to a precarious state, since the proprietors were at liberty, after every voyage, to withdraw the latter, which served as the basis of the operations. To give this body a more solid constitution, these two stocks have been confounded. Hereafter, the proprietors will not have it in their power to claim any part of their capital, till the expiration of their charter. Those among them, who, for any possible reason, may wish to lessen the risk, will be obliged to sell their shares, as it is the constant practice everywhere else.

At the expiration of the last charter, the company had a capital of 11,906,059 livres [496,085l. 15s. 10d.] divided into sixteen hundred shares, each of the value of about 7425 livres [309l. 7s. 6d.] The price of the share was evident-

ly too high in a country where the fortunes of individuals are inconsiderable. This inconvenience has been remedied, by dividing each share into three parts; so that there are at present four thousand eight hundred shares, the price of which, for greater security, has been only rated in the books at 2250 livres [93l. 15s.] This alteration must have facilitated the purchase and the sale of them, by increasing the circulation and the value.

The project of raising the Danish settlements in India to a greater degree of prosperity than they had hitherto attained, has next been taken into consideration. In order to effect this, it has been regulated, that 2,250,000 livres [93,750l.] including their estimated value of 900,000 [37,500l.] should constantly be left there. The profits accruing from this stock are to remain during ten years, and to be applied to the increase of the capital, and no dividends are to be made of them.

Till these latter times, the ships fitted out in Europe for China, used always to carry with them the factors who were to make up the cargoes. It has judiciously been imagined, that agents residing among these celebrated people, would enter more into the spirit of the nation, and would make their sales and purchases with greater facility and advantage. In this view, four factors have been fixed at Canton, to manage there the interests of the company that has chosen them.

The Danes had formerly a small settlement on the islands of Nicobar. The expence of it was trifling, but it yielded nothing; and therefore has very prudently been given up.

The company had contracted the habit of granting, upon mortgage, a credit of several years to the purchasers. This indulgence frequently obliged them to borrow considerable sums at Amsterdam, or at Copenhagen. A practice unknown to the rival nations has been violently opposed. It would have been dangerous, perhaps, to give it up entirely; but it has been restrained within such narrow bounds, that it can no longer create mistrust.

To these principles of commerce, much superior to those that were followed before, the company have added the advantages of a direction better regulated, more enlightened, and more closely superintended.

Universal confidence has been the result of these prudent combinations. Although the dividend has risen no higher than eight per cent. in 1773, and ten per cent. in 1774, and 1775, yet there has been a profit of twenty-five and thirty per cent. upon the shares. Their price would in all probability have been still higher, if the internal peace of the society had not of late been so scandalously disturbed.

The old company confined their operations to the trade of China. Among all those they had to choose, this was the one in which they had the least risk to run, and the greatest profit to expect. Without giving up this source of riches, other means of acquiring them, which had been too long neglected, have been pursued.

The coast of Malabar, it is true, has not taken up much of the attention of the company. Formerly, no more than sixty thousand weight of pepper were annually drawn from Coleschey and Calicut. These purchases have not had any considerable increase, but there was reason to hope that affairs would wear a more promising aspect in Bengal.

The Danes had but just made their appearance in the Indies, when they fixed themselves at Chinchurat, upon the borders of the Ganges. Their misfortunes drove them from this opulent region during more than a century. They came there again in 1755, with a desire of fixing themselves at Bankibasar, which had belonged to the Ostend company. Commercial jealousy, which is become the ruling passion of our times, frustrated their designs, and they were reduced to the necessity of founding Frederic-Nagor in the neighbourhood. This factory cost annually 22,500 livres [937l. 10s.] more than was collected from its territory and the customs; and this expence, though inconsiderable, was still greater than the transactions would bear. The care that was taken, after the renewal of the charter, to send some money to this too much-neglected settlement, began to give it some share of animation; but it soon fell again to nothing. Its destruction is owing to its having been placed in a state of absolute dependence upon Tranquebar.

This first of the Danish colonies has an excellent territory, which, though only two leagues in circumference,

had formerly a population of thirty thousand persons. There were even ten thousand of these in the city itself. Rather a greater number were found in a large village, filled with coarse manufactures. The remainder were usefully employed in some places of less consequence. These, with three hundred workmen, factors, merchants, or soldiers, were all the Europeans fixed in the settlement. Its revenue amounted to 100,000 livres [4166l. 13s. 4d.] and was sufficient for its expences.

In process of time, confusion took place in the colony, which yielded less, and cost twice as much. The adventurers went away; the manufacturers languished, the purchasers were diminished, and a very scanty profit only was obtained upon those that were ordered at distant periods. Impossible as it was to make any advances to the workmen, it was necessary to pay for the merchandize five-and-twenty or thirty per cent. dearer than if the customs of the country had been complied with.

Since the year 1772, the aspect of Tranquebar has been changed. A small degree of liberty, some stock, a better administration, and an increase of territory, combined with other causes, have improved its condition. But its destiny, any more than that of the society which regulates it, will never be brilliant.

The local position of Denmark, the disposition of its inhabitants, the degree of its power relatively considered; every circumstance, in a word, is unfavourable to its carrying on a great trade with India. Are its provinces sufficiently rich to furnish the sums necessary for large undertakings; or will foreigners trust their property with a society, subject to the caprice, and exposed to the vexations, of unlimited authority? It is in the nature of a despotic government to dissolve the ties which ought to unite nations; and when once this spring is destroyed, it can never be restored. It is mutual confidence which draws men together, and combines their interests; and arbitrary power is incompatible with this confidence, because it puts an end to all security. The project formed in 1728, of transferring from Copenhagen to Altona the seat of the Asiatic trade, might possibly be attended with some advantages; but could not remove any of the obstacles we have been mentioning. We may therefore venture to affirm, that England and Holland

were guilty of a needless act of tyranny, when they opposed this domestic plan of a free and independent power.

Can the man who has any concern for mankind, and who is not possessed of the narrow soul of a monk, to whom the circuit of his cloistered prison is all, and the rest of the universe is nothing; can such a one conceive any thing more absurd and more cruel than this infamous jealousy of the great powers; this horrible abuse of their strength, in preventing feeble states from improving their condition? The individual who should think of acting the same part in the midst of his country, which they do among other nations, would be looked upon as the most execrable of malefactors. English, French, Dutch, Spaniards, and Germans, this is the honest motive for which you take up arms, and massacre each other! It is to determine which of you shall retain the exclusive privilege of tyranny, and the monopoly of prosperity. I am aware that you colour this atrocious project with the pretence of providing for your own security: but how can you be credited, when it is evident that you set no bounds to your ambition; and that the more powerful you are, the more imperious you become? You are not satisfied with requiring every thing that it is in your own private interest to obtain, your pride sometimes prompts you to ask what it would be shameful to grant. You do not consider that a people cannot be degraded without fatal consequences. Their honour may lie dormant for a time; but sooner or later it will be roused, and they will avenge themselves: and as humiliation is the most offensive of all injuries, so it is that which is most severely felt and most cruelly revenged.

Establishment of an India company at Ostend. That knowledge of trade and government, and that sound philosophy, which insensibly spread over all Europe, met with invincible obstacles in some monarchies. These improvements could not reach the court of Vienna, which was wholly intent upon projects of war and aggrandisement, by conquests. The English and Dutch, whose attention was engaged in preventing France from increasing her commerce, her settlements, and her navy, excited enemies against her on the continent, and lavished immense sums upon the house of Austria, which

were employed against France: but, at the peace, the luxury of one crown restored more riches to the other than it had taken from it by the war.

The power of the house of Austria, which ought to be formidable from the extent of its dominions, is confined by reason of its situation; for most of its provinces are distant from the sea. The soil of the country yields but a small quantity of wine, and few of the productions that are so much valued by other nations. It affords neither oil, silk, nor fine wool, which are so much in repute. This state had no pretensions to opulence, and knew not how to be frugal. With the usual luxury and pomp of great courts, it gave no encouragement to industry and manufactures, which might have supplied the means of indulging that expensive taste. The contempt which it has always shewn for the sciences, prevented its progress in every thing. Artists will never be eminent in any country where they are not assisted by men of learning. Sciences and arts must both languish, wherever a freedom of thinking is not allowed. The pride and intolerant spirit of the house of Austria kept her vast domains in a state of poverty, superstition, and a rude kind of luxury.

Even the Low Countries, formerly so celebrated for their activity and industry, retained nothing of their ancient splendour. The traveller, who went to Antwerp, beheld with astonishment the ruins of a city formerly so flourishing. He compared its exchange with the superb edifices of paganism, after the abolition of idolatry. It presented the same solitude, the same majesty. The indigent and melancholy citizens were observed walking about it, as under Constantine; the tattered priests were seen roaming around their deserted temples, or sitting at the foot of the altars where the hecatombs had been sacrificed, and telling the people their fortunes for a small piece of copper. Antwerp, which had been, for two centuries, the storehouse of the north, had not now a single ship in its harbour. Brussels and Louvain, far from supplying other nations with their clothing, bought their own of the English. That valuable article, the herring-fishery, had passed from Bruges to Holland. Ghent, Courtray, and some other towns, found their linen and lace manufactures decrease daily. Those provinces, placed between the three most enlighten-

ed and most trading nations in Europe, had not been able, with all their natural advantages, to support so powerful a competition. After striving some time against oppression, against impediments multiplied by ignorance, and against the privileges which a rapacious neighbour extorted from the continual wants of government, they were totally fallen to decay.

Prince Eugene, as great in a political, as he was in a military capacity, with a mind superior to every prejudice, had been long in search of the means of enriching a power, the boundaries of which he had so greatly enlarged; when a proposal was made to him of establishing an India company at Ostend. The first contrivers of this scheme had very extensive views. They pretended that, if this undertaking could be accomplished, it would excite a spirit of industry in all the states under the dominion of the house of Austria; would supply that power with a navy, one part of which would be in the Netherlands, and the other at Fiume and Trieste; would rescue it from the kind of dependence it was still under for the subsidies from England and Holland; and render it formidable to the coasts of Turkey, and even to the city of Constantinople.

The able minister, to whom this was addressed, was very sensible of the value of such overtures; he would not, however, be too precipitate. To accustom his own court and all Europe to this new establishment, he ordered that two ships should be sent out to India in 1717, with only his own passports. Their voyage was so successful, that more were sent out the following years. Every expedition proved fortunate; and in 1722 the council of Vienna thought it was necessary to secure the property of the adventurers, who were mostly Flemings, by the most ample charter that ever had been granted. The only stipulation made, was, that the company should pay to government, till the end of the year 1724, three per cent. upon every thing exported or imported, and after that period six per cent.

The rapacity of all governments is inconceivable. Throughout the whole course of this history, we shall not find perhaps one single instance, in which the tax has not accompanied the undertaking; not one sovereign, who has not been desirous of securing to himself part of the harvest before it was gathered in, without perceiving that these premature

exactions were the surest way of destroying it. From whence does this kind of delirium arise? Is it from ignorance, or from poverty? Or, is there a secret separation of the interest peculiar to government, from the general interest of the state?

However this may be, the new company, which had a capital of six millions of florins, or 10,800,000 livres [450,000l.] appeared with advantage in all the markets of India. They made two settlements, that of Coblom between Madras and Sadraspatnam, on the coast of Coromandel; and that of Bankibasar, on the Ganges. They were even in search of a place where their ships might touch for refreshments, and had turned their views upon Madagascar for that purpose. The company were so fortunate as to be able to repose an entire confidence in their agents, who had shewn a degree of resolution sufficient to surmount every obstacle that jealousy had thrown in their way; and a share of understanding, which had extricated them from all the snares that had been laid for them. This confidence was still increased by the richness of their returns, and the value of their shares, which brought in fifteen per cent. It is not to be supposed they would have been disappointed, had not their projects been opposed by political interests. To give a clear idea of the reasons of this policy, we must trace the subject from the beginning.

WHEN Isabella had sent out ships to facilitate the discovery of America, and which proceeded as far as the Philippine islands, Europe was sunk in such a state of ignorance, that it was thought proper to prohibit all subjects of Spain, who were not natives of Castile, from navigating to the East and West Indies. That part of the Low Countries which had not recovered its liberty, having been ceded, in 1598, to the infantia Isabella, on her marriage with the archduke Albert, the new sovereigns were required to enter into a solemn engagement not to have any concern in this trade. When these provinces were again united to the monarchy in 1638, no alteration was made in this odious stipulation. The Flemings, justly offended at being abridged of the right, which all people are by nature intitled to, of trading wherever other nations are not legal-

*Causes of the
destruction of
the company
at Ostend.*

ly possessed of an exclusive privilege, complained loudly of this imposition. They were seconded by their governor the cardinal Infant, who procured the permission to trade to the East Indies. The act to ratify this grant was not yet issued, when Portugal shook off the yoke under which it had so long been oppressed. The fear of increasing the discontent of the Portuguese, whom the Spaniards wished rather to sooth, prevented the introduction of a new rival to the Portuguese in Asia, and protracted the conclusion of this important affair. It was not yet settled, when it was resolved at Munster, in 1648, that the subjects of the king of Spain should never extend their trade in India beyond what it was at that period. This act ought not to have been less binding to the emperor than it was to the court of Madrid; since he possesses the Low Countries on the same terms, and with the same restrictions, they were subject to when under the dominion of Spain.

Such were the arguments made use of by the English and the Dutch, in order to effect the suppression of the new company, the success of which gave them great uneasiness. Those two allies, who by their maritime forces could have entirely destroyed Ostend and its trade, were desirous of avoiding a dispute with a power which they themselves had raised, and which they thought they stood in need of against the house of Bourbon. So that, though they were determined not to suffer the house of Austria to go to the source of their riches, they contented themselves with making remonstrances on the violation of the most solemn engagements. They were seconded by France, which was equally interested in this matter, and was also guarantee of the violated treaty.

The emperor paid no regard to these representations. He was induced to persist in his undertaking by the obstinacy of his own disposition, by the ambitious prospects that had been suggested to him, and by the great privileges and indulgences granted by Spain to the merchants residing in his dominions. That crown then entertained the hopes of obtaining the heiress of the house of Austria for Don Carlos, and thought no concessions too great for such an alliance. The union of those two courts, which had always been considered as irreconcilable, alarmed all Europe. Every nation thought itself in danger. Numberless leagues

were formed, and many treaties concluded, to endeavour to dissolve that connection, which was thought to be more dangerous than it really was. All these attempts were ineffectual, till the council of Madrid, having no more treasures to lavish upon Germany, were convinced that they were pursuing a visionary interest. Austria was not surprised at the defection of her ally, and seemed determined to assert her claims, and especially her commercial interests. Whether the maritime powers were intimidated by this steadiness, or whether, as was more probably the case, they only consulted the dictates of sound policy, they determined to guarantee the pragmatic sanction in 1727. The court of Vienna acknowledged this important service, by sacrificing the Ostend company.

Though the public acts take notice only of a suspension for seven years, the proprietors plainly saw that their ruin was determined upon, and that this stipulation was only inserted from respect to the imperial dignity. They had too high an opinion of the court of London and the states general, to suppose they would have secured the indivisibility of the Austrian dominions for a mere temporary advantage. This persuasion determined them to think no more of Ostend, and to dispose of their stock some other way. They made several successive attempts to form an establishment at Hamburgh, at Trieste, and in Tuscany; but all their endeavours proved abortive, either from the badness of the situation, the efforts of powerful nations, or the intrigues of politics. Those were the most successful who turned their views towards Sweden.

THE study of nations is of all others the most interesting. The observer delights to be acquainted with the particular stroke of character that distinguishes each people, and to separate it from the numerous general characteristics that accompany it. In vain has this distinguishing mark taken a tincture from events: in vain have natural or moral causes altered the shades of it. A penetrating eye traces it through all these disguises, and perceives it notwithstanding these variations. The more extensive the field of observation is, the greater number of ages it presents to be estimated, and

Swedish East-India company. Revolutions in the government of that nation.

of periods to investigate, so much the more easier is it to determine the problem. Every age, and every period, gives, if we may be allowed the expression, its own equation; and all these cannot be solved without discovering the truth, which was, as it were, wrapped up in them.

But the desire of being acquainted with a nation, must increase in proportion to the part it has borne upon the theatre of the universe, and to the influence it has had in those majestic or terrible scenes that have agitated the globe. The cause and effects of this great tumult attract equally the attention of the learned and of the multitude; and it is seldom that we are tired of reflecting upon them. Are the Swedes to be ranked among the people who have acquired a celebrated name? This is a point which my readers will decide.

Sweden was little known before its ferocious inhabitants had concurred with the other barbarians of the North in the subversion of the Roman empire. After they had spread destruction with the violence and rapidity of a torrent, they returned to their former obscurity. An uncultivated and desert region, without manners, without policy, and without form of government, could scarce fix the attention of Europe, which was then but little enlightened, and which made no efforts to emerge from its ignorance. If we may believe some old chronicles, of doubtful authority, plunder and assassinations were very frequent. Sometimes one single chief ruled over the whole country, which at other times was divided among several masters. These rivals, greedy of power, had recourse to the most shameful or most violent methods to supplant each other; and revolutions were perpetually taking place. It was between fathers and children that these wars were more particularly inveterate. Christianity, which was adopted in this country at the end of the eighth, or the beginning of the ninth century, did not produce the least alteration in the condition of these people. The same animosity, the same contests, and the same calamities, were still experienced. This dreadful state had been but very little improved, when some unfortunate events placed Sweden under the dominion of the Danes, or in a kind of alliance which partook of slavery. This shameful bondage was dissolved by Gustavus Va-

sa, who, in 1521, was chosen administrator of the state, and two years after, its monarch.

The empire was then in a state of anarchy. The priests exercised the principal authority; and the treasury received annually no more than twenty-four thousand marks of silver, although the public expences amounted to sixty thousand. The new king shewed himself worthy of the situation to which he was raised, by concentrating in his hands, powers that were diffusely scattered, by rendering the crown hereditary in his family, by depriving the clergy of part of their usurpations, by substituting lutheranism to the established form of worship, and by prudently settling the nature and appropriation of the taxes: but this sovereign, having carried his system of reformation too far, precipitated his subjects into misfortunes, which might, and ought to have been, foreseen.

Sweden, which from the nature of its productions, its wants, and the extent of its coasts, seemed destined for navigation, had nevertheless neglected it, since its inhabitants had been disgusted of piracy. The people of Lubeck traded with them for their provisions; and brought them salt, stuffs, and all the foreign merchandize they consumed. No ships were seen in their roads; nor were there any magazines in their towns, which did not belong to that republic.

The haughty soul of Gustavus could not brook this dependence. He was determined to break the bands that cramped the industry of his subjects; but he was too precipitate in his measures. He shut his harbours against the people of Lubeck, before he had built any ships, and before he had got any merchants. From this period there was scarce any further intercourse between his subjects and other nations. The whole kingdom fell into a state of languor, of which it would be difficult to form any adequate idea. Some English and Dutch ships, which appeared there at distant intervals, had but imperfectly remedied this evil, when Gustavus Adolphus ascended the throne.

He signalized the first years of his reign by several useful alterations. Agriculture was encouraged; the mines were worked with greater skill; companies were formed to trade to Persia and the West Indies; the foundations of a new colony were laid on the coast of North America. The Swedish flag was displayed in all the European latitudes.

This new spirit was of short duration. The success of the great Gustavus in war, turned entirely the genius of the nation to arms. All men were stimulated with the desire of rendering their names illustrious, by following the traces of this hero and of his disciples. The hope of plunder was united to the love of glory. Every man was eager to conquer the enemy, and to enrich himself with their spoils. The national education was entirely military, and the houses seemed to be converted into camps. The temples, the castles, and even the simplest dwelling-places, were adorned with numberless trophies. One generation of soldiers was succeeded by another of a similar or still more daring nature. This enthusiasm had spread itself among the lower ranks of people, as among the highest. Labours of a superior, or of a meaner kind, were all equally despised; and a Swede thought himself born only to conquer, and to regulate the destinies of empires. This martial fury had been carried beyond all bounds under Charles XII, but it was extinguished after the tragical death of that extraordinary man.

The Swedes then became quite another people. The exhausted state of the kingdom; the loss of former conquests; the elevation of Russia; every circumstance, in a word, tended to disgust the most confident of a system, which it was no longer possible to follow with any hopes of success, or even without the risk of completing the ruin of an edifice already shaken by repeated and violent shocks. Peace was the wish both of those who had grown old in the service of the field, and of those whose age had not yet called them to bear arms. The cry of the whole nation was for its liberty, which had been successively attacked with precaution, destroyed by Charles XI, and even the shadow of which had been taken away by the unfortunate monarch who had just descended into the grave without issue. All the orders of the state were assembled; and without abolishing the regal title, they restored the republican form of government, and even gave it a greater degree of extension than it had had before.

This great revolution was not preceded by any commotion, nor followed by any disturbance. All the changes were made upon mature deliberation. The first attention was paid to the most necessary professions, which till then

had been unnoticed or despised. The arts of convenience, or elegance, were soon introduced. The young nobility travelled into every part of Europe where they might gain any kind of knowledge. Those citizens, who had been for a long time absent from their country while it remained in a state of ruin and devastation, returned and brought back with them the various talents they had acquired. Order, political economy, and the several branches of government, became subjects of inquiry. Whatever concerned the republic was maturely discussed in the general assemblies, and freely approved or censured in the public writings. Some useful publications upon the abstruse sciences appeared, which were worthy of the notice of the most enlightened nations. A language, hitherto barbarous, was at length fixed to some grammatical rules, and acquired, in process of time, a degree of precision and elegance. The manners and morals of the people underwent still more necessary and more fortunate alterations. Politeness, affability, and a spirit of communication, succeeded to that sternness of temper, and that roughness of character, which a continual state of warfare had left behind it. Improvements of every kind were adopted, from whatever part of the globe they came. Foreigners, who introduced any new discoveries, or any branch of useful knowledge, met with encouragement; and it was at this favourable juncture that the agents of the Ostend company made their appearance.

A RICH merchant of Stockholm, named Henry Koning, approved of their schemes, and procured the approbation of the diet in 1731. An India company was established, with an exclusive privilege of trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope. The charter was only for fifteen years. It was thought that this would be the best expedient, either to afford an early opportunity of rectifying any imperfections incident to new undertakings, or to relieve the anxiety of many citizens who warmly opposed an enterprise, which they thought repugnant to the nature of the climate and the constitution. In order, as much as possible, to unite the advantages of a free trade with those of a privileged association, it was agreed that the stock should not be fixed,

The Swedes have a share in the India trade. Manner in which they conduct it.

and that each proprietor should be at liberty to withdraw his own at the end of every voyage. As most of the adventurers were foreigners, chiefly Flemings, it was thought equitable to secure a profit to the nation, by obliging them to pay the government fifteen hundred silver dollars, or three thousand three hundred and ninety livres [141l. 5s.] upon the cargo of every ship.

This tax did not prevent the company from fitting out five-and-twenty ships during the time that their charter lasted. Three of these were sent to Bengal, and two-and-twenty to China. One of these ships was wrecked with its whole cargo, and three of them perished without any lading. Notwithstanding these misfortunes, the proprietors, beside their capital, received eight hundred seventeen and a half per cent. which, one year with another, amounted to fifty-four and a half per cent. a profit infinitely great, though each of the proprietors was obliged to make and to pay his own insurances out of it.

In 1746 the company obtained a new charter for twenty years. They dispatched successively three vessels to Surat, and thirty-three to Canton, one of which was wrecked with all its lading, near the place of its destination. The profits of the proprietors arose to eight hundred seventy-one and one quarter per cent. or forty-three per cent. every year. A remarkable event distinguished this charter from the first. From the year 1753, the proprietors gave up the liberty they had always enjoyed, of withdrawing their capital at pleasure, and resolved to form themselves into a permanent body. The state induced them to consent to this new arrangement, by taking no more than a duty of twenty per cent. upon all the mercantile articles that should be consumed in the kingdom, instead of seventy-five thousand livres [3125l.] which it had received for seven years past upon every voyage. This sacrifice had been made with a design to enable the Swedish company to sustain the competition of that which had just been established at Embden: but the public necessities occasioned this indulgence to be retracted in 1765. Perfidy was carried so far, that even all the arrears were required to be paid.

In 1766, the monopoly was renewed for twenty years more. The company lent the government 1,250,000 livres [52,083l. 6s. 8d.] without interest, and twice that sum up-

on an interest of six per cent. The first of these loans was to be successively paid off by retaining the 93,750 livres [3906l. 15s.] which the company had engaged to give for every ship they fitted out; and the second was to be returned at four stipulated periods. Before the first of January 1778, one-and-twenty vessels had been sent off, all for China; four of which were still expected. The seventeen that had returned, had brought back with them twenty-two millions six hundred thousand pounds weight of tea, and some other articles of much less importance. It cannot be precisely ascertained what profits have accrued from these expeditions; but it may be presumed that they were considerable, since the shares have gained as far as two-and-forty per cent. It is however generally known, that the dividend was twelve per cent. in 1770, and that it has been six per cent. all the other years, and that the company is charged with the insurances since 1753.

The company have fixed the seat of their affairs at Gottenburg, the position of which afforded conveniences for the fitting out of ships, and for the sale of goods, which were not to be met with in the other ports of the kingdom. A preference so useful has considerably increased activity in its road, and the cultivation of its territory.

At the origin of the company, their stock varied from one voyage to another. It was said to be rated at six millions [250,000l.] in 1753, and at five [208,333l. 6s. 8d.] only at the last convention. The best-informed persons know nothing upon this important point except from mere conjecture; for the matter was never laid before the public. As the Swedes had at first much less concern in this stock than they have had since, the government have thought proper to envelop it in mystery. In order to effect this, it was enacted, that any director who should divulge the names of the proprietors, or the sums they had subscribed, should be suspended, or even deposed, and should forfeit for ever all the money he had ventured in this undertaking. This spirit of mystery, inconceivable in a free country, continued five-and-thirty years. Twelve of the proprietors were indeed to examine the accounts of the directors every four years: but these examiners were appointed by the direction. Since the year 1767, the proprietors themselves are the persons who choose these commissaries, and who receive their re-

ports at a general meeting. This new arrangement will certainly have diminished corruption. Secrecy in politics is like 'lying; it may preserve a state for the moment, but must certainly ruin it in the end. Both are only serviceable to evil-minded persons.

The produce of the sales has not always been equal. It has been more or less considerable, according to the number and size of the ships employed in the trade; and according to the dearth of the articles at the place of their manufacture, or their scarcity in Europe. We may however affirm, that it has scarce ever been lower than two millions of livres [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] and has never risen higher than five millions [208,333l. 6s. 8d.] Tea has always yielded four fifths of this produce.

It is with piastres, bought at Cadiz, that these affairs have been transacted. The little that has been brought from other parts does not deserve to be mentioned.

The consumption in Sweden was at first rather more considerable than it has been since, because originally there was no duty upon the Asiatic productions. Most of them have been since subjected to a tax of twenty, or five-and-twenty per cent.; some of them even, such as the silks, have been prohibited at times. These taxes have reduced the annual consumption of the kingdom to the value of three hundred thousand livres [12,500l.] All the rest is exported, on paying to the state one eighth per cent. on the produce of the sale. Sweden, considering the little specie it has, and the mediocrity of its intrinsic resources, cannot admit of a higher degree of luxury; of which we shall soon be convinced.

Present state of Sweden. SWEDEN, including that part of Finland and Lapland under its dominion, is of prodigious extent. Its coasts, which are in general difficult of access, are embarrassed with an infinite number of rocks, and many small islands, where some men, almost savages, live by fishing. The interior part of the country is very mountainous. Some plains, however, are to be found, the soil of which, though sandy, marshy, and full of ferruginous matter, is not barren, especially in the most southern provinces. To the north of the empire, want has taught the people, that they could live upon bread made

of the bark of the birch tree, with a few roots and a little rye. In order to procure a nourishment more wholesome and more agreeable, they have endeavoured to sow some of the high grounds, after having felled and burnt the trees that were upon them. The most prudent among them have given up this practice, after having observed that trees and grass no longer grew upon a stony and meagre soil, exhausted by two or three plentiful harvests. Very large spaces of territory are covered with lakes of greater or less extent: these useless collections of water have been skilfully turned to advantage, in establishing, with the help of several rivers, canals, and sluices, an uninterrupted navigation from Stockholm to Gottenburg.

This sketch of the natural state of Sweden, would induce us to suppose that this country was never much peopled, though it has sometimes been called the *manufactory of human kind*. Probably the numerous bands that came from thence, and which, under the so-much-dreaded name of Goths and Vandals, ravaged and subdued so many regions of Europe, were only swarms of Scythians and Sarmatians, who came thither in a constant succession by the north of Asia. Yet it would be, perhaps, a mistake to suppose, that this vast country was always as thinly peopled as it is now. According to all probability, three hundred years ago, this country had more inhabitants than it has at present, though at that time they professed the catholic religion, which enjoins the monastic life and the celibacy of the clergy. The account taken in 1751 did not compute the number of souls at more than two millions two hundred and twenty-nine thousand six hundred and sixty-one. In 1769 this number was increased by three hundred and forty-three thousand. It is generally supposed, that since this period, the population, only the thirteenth part of which dwells in the towns, has not increased, but has rather diminished; and this calamity is to be attributed to misery, and to the prevalence of epidemic diseases.

The number of inhabitants would be greater in Sweden, if it were not continually deserted by the natives, who frequently never return. There are men in all nations, who, either from motives of curiosity, or from a natural restlessness, and without any determinate object, are fond of going from one country to another; but this is only the malady

of a few individuals, and cannot be considered as the general cause of a constant emigration. There is a natural propensity in all men to love their own country, which is rather to be accounted for from moral, than from natural principles. An inherent fondness for society, the ties of blood and of friendship, an acquaintance with the climate and language, that partiality we are so apt to contract for the place, the manners, and the way of life we are accustomed to; all these are, to a rational being, so many motives of attachment to the land in which he was born and educated. They must be powerful inducements that can determine him to break all these ties at once, and to prefer another country, where all will appear extraordinary and new to him. In Sweden, where the whole power resides in the states composed of the several orders of the kingdom, even that of the peasants, every one should naturally be more attached to his country; yet emigrations are very frequent, and there is no reason to be surprised at it.

The lands in cultivation were formerly divided into four-score thousand and fifty-two hemmans, or farms, which it was not permitted to parcel out. By an error still more palpable, the laws had determined the number of persons that might live upon each of these farms. When this number was completed, the father of a family was obliged himself to expel from his house his children born after that period, however he might be in want of them to increase the mass of his productions. It had been expected that this regulation would occasion the clearing of the uncultivated lands, and produce new hemmans. But it should have been foreseen, that men, kept in such a state of oppression, would neither have the will nor the means of attending to new establishments; and that most of them would go into foreign countries, in search of that tranquillity of which their own so unjustly deprived them. The eyes of the government were not opened till the year 1748. At this period it was at length understood, that the public required, that the labourers should have no greater extent of soil than they could conveniently work; and the diet allowed them to divide their inheritance into as many portions as they should think proper. This new arrangement of things has already lessened the emigrations, and must, in process of time, bring on the improvement of agriculture.

This was, it is said, in a tolerably-flourishing state when Gustavus Vasa ascended the throne. This opinion is evidently an improbable one, since before that period the empire had only emerged from the horrors of anarchy, to pass under the yoke of foreign tyranny. It is at least a fact, that since that time, this first of the arts has been always in a languid state. The nation has continually been reduced to the necessity of drawing a great part of its subsistence from its neighbours, and sometimes to the amount of six or seven millions of livres [from 250,000. to 291,666l. 13s. 4d.] Many causes have contributed to this misfortune. Among the most considerable may be reckoned the distribution of a small number of men over too great a space. The distance at which they were from one another, obliged each of them separately to provide for almost all his own wants, and has prevented them all from seriously devoting themselves to any profession, and even to the cultivation of the lands.

The insufficiency of the harvests threw the state into continual embarrassments. The measures adopted at distant intervals to remove this evil, have not produced the desired effect. At length, in 1772, the government had the firmness to strike at the principal cause of it, by prohibiting the distilling of the corn. Unfortunately, the laws were not of sufficient force to counteract the passion these people had for this kind of spirit; and the state was obliged to relax the severity of them. Its condescension was not indeed carried so far, as to authorise the citizens to prepare this liquor themselves, as they were used to do; but it engaged to furnish them with about three hundred thousand tons of grain for this purpose, instead of a million of tons that were before employed in it.

Since this epocha, Sweden has drawn much less corn from foreign markets. Some of her writers on agriculture have even pretended, that she might do without this assistance, if the nation were to forsake its erroneous methods of proceeding in these matters. This opinion will not meet with many partisans. Whether it be from the defect of the soil, of climate, or of industry, it is certain, that the same number of men working the same number of days, and with the same means, do not bring forth in this region more than a third part of the productions obtained in more fortunate countries.

These disadvantages of agriculture must be compensated by the mines, most of which belonged formerly to the priests. From the hands of the clergy they passed, in 1480, into those of the government. By a still more fortunate revolution they have since become the property of individuals.

There is only the gold mine, discovered in 1738, that has remained with the state. As it yields only seven or eight hundred ducats [between 300*l.* and 400*l.* on an average] per annum; and that this sum is insufficient to defray the expences of working it, no native or foreigner has yet offered to take it upon himself.

The silver mine of Sala has been known since the eleventh century. During the course of the fourteenth, it yielded twenty-four thousand marks; and in the fifteenth, no more than twenty-one thousand two hundred and eighty. It fell more and more, till the beginning of the century in which we now live. At present it produces from seventeen to eighteen hundred marks every year. This is fifteen or sixteen times more than all the other mines taken together.

Alum, sulphur, cobalt, and vitriol, are more abundant. These are nothing, however, or scarcely any thing, in comparison of the mines of copper, and especially of iron. From the year 1754 to 1768, there were exported annually nine hundred and ninety-five thousand six hundred and seven quintals of this last metal. It then became to be less in vogue, because Russia brought to market iron of the same quality 20 per cent. cheaper. The Swedes were obliged to lower their price, and they must lower it still more, in order not to lose entirely the most important branch of their trade. The most intelligent among them have taken the resolution of working their iron themselves, and of converting it into steel, wire, nails, cannon, anchors, and other materials of primary necessity to other nations; and the government has prudently encouraged this industry by gratifications. These favours have met with general approbation; while opinions have been divided with respect to those granted to other manufactures.

There was not, properly speaking, any manufacture in the kingdom at the memorable era which restored it to its liberty. It was soon divided by two parties; one who dis-

played an inordinate passion for all sorts of manufactures, and lavished the most excessive encouragements upon them all, without distinguishing those which might be useful from those which might be prejudicial to the state. Great confusion arose, from which the nation emerged only to fall into an excess equally fatal. The opposite party having prevailed, showed as much aversion for the manufactures of necessity, as for these that were merely works of luxury, and deprived them both indiscriminately of all the privileges and favours that had been heaped upon them. Notwithstanding the prodigalities of the treasury, they had as yet acquired no consistence; and the suppression of these enormous grants occasioned their total decay. The foreign artists, and even those of the country, disappeared. The flattering prospect of promoting great industry vanished at once; and the nation found itself nearly in the same state as it was in before the year 1720.

The fisheries have not shared the same fate as the arts. The only one that deserves our notice, in a political point of view, is the herring fishery. It cannot be traced farther back than 1740. Before that period, the herrings did not frequent the coasts of Sweden. They then came in shoals to the coast of Gottenburg, which they have never since forsaken. The nation consumes annually forty thousand barrels of this fish; and there are one hundred and sixty thousand barrels exported; which, at the rate of thirteen livres fifteen sols [about 11s. 5½d.] each, brings in a revenue of 2,200,000 livres [91,666l. 13s. 4d.] to the state.

The Swedish nation was not yet possessed of this advantage, when the government resolved that foreign navigators should not be allowed to introduce into the ports of Sweden any other than the commodities of their own country; and that they should not even be permitted to convey these from one harbour of the kingdom to another. That famous edict, known by the name of *placard des productions*, restored navigation, which had long since been annihilated by the calamities of war. A flag, which had been hitherto unknown, was now displayed on all the seas. The seamen soon acquired skill and experience. Some able politicians were even of opinion that their progress was growing too considerable for a depopulated country. They thought it

would be more advisable to confine themselves to the exportation of their own produce, and the importation of such foreign commodities as they wanted, and totally to lay aside the mere freighting trade. This system was warmly opposed. Some able men were of opinion that, far from restraining this branch of industry, it ought to be encouraged, by abolishing every regulation that might tend to obstruct it. The exclusive right of passing the Sound was formerly appropriated to a few towns, distinguished by the name of *Staple*. All the parts situated to the north of Stockholm and Abo, were obliged to send their commodities to one of these staples, and there to take in those of the Baltic, which they could have procured cheaper at first hand. These odious distinctions, contrived in barbarous times, and tending to favour the monopoly of merchants, still subsist to this day. The wisest speculators in political matters, wish to see them abolished, that a more general competition may produce greater industry.

If we were to judge of the trade of Sweden by the number of ships it employs, we should think it very important. But when we consider, that this country sells nothing but tar, pitch, potash, planks, fish, and coarse metals, we shall not be surprised to find, that its annual exports do not exceed 15,000,000 livres [625,000*l.*] The returns would still be less by one-fourth, if we were to be regulated by the accounts of the customs. But it is a known fact, that although they are only defrauded of five per cent. upon the exports, yet they are cheated of five-and-twenty per cent. on the imports. Admitting this, there would be an almost complete balance between what was sold and what was bought; and the kingdom would neither gain nor lose by its outward connections. Persons extremely well versed in these matters, pretend even that the balance is to the disadvantage of the state, and that it has only filled up the deficiency which this circumstance must have occasioned in its specie, by the help of the subsidies that have been granted by foreign powers. It behoves the nation to redouble all its efforts to extricate itself from so disagreeable a situation. Let us examine whether the troops are upon a better footing.

Before the reign of Gustavus Vasa, every Swede was a soldier. Upon an emergency of the state, the husbandman

left his plough, and took up his bow. The whole nation was inured to war by civil commotions, which were unfortunately continual. Government had then but five hundred men in pay; but in 1542, this small corps was increased to six thousand. In order to be disencumbered from the maintenance of these forces, it was suggested, that a portion of the domains of the crown should be assigned to them. This plan, opposed for a long time by private interests, was at length carried into execution. Charles XI resumed the royal lands, which his predecessors, and especially queen Christina, had lavished upon their favourites, and settled the most valuable part of his army upon them.

This army consists at present of a body of twelve thousand and twenty-eight men, always assembled, formed indiscriminately of natives and foreigners, having a regular pay, and serving to garrison all the fortresses of the kingdom. There is another corps still more distinguished, and considered by the people as the bulwark of the empire; it is that which is known by the title of national troops. It consists of thirty-four thousand two hundred and sixty-six men, who are assembled only one-and-twenty days in every year. They have no pay: but they have received from government, under the name of *boftel*, possessions sufficient for their subsistence. From the common soldier to the general, every man has a dwelling of his own, and lands which he must cultivate. The conveniences of the lodging, and the extent and value of the territory, are proportioned to the rank every man holds in this corps.

This institution has received the encomiums of all Europe. Those who have seen the effects of it upon the spot, have been less warm in their approbation of it. They have observed, that these lands, which were passing with rapidity from one possessor to another, were always in the greatest disorder: that the character of the husbandman was diametrically opposite to that of the military man; that the man who cultivated the land attached himself to it, from the care he bestowed upon it, and never quitted it without regret; while the soldier, led by his profession from one province of the kingdom to another, or from one country to a distant region, ought always to hold himself in readiness to march cheerfully at the first stroke of the drum, or the first sound of the trumpet: that the labours of the field grow

languid, when they are not seconded by a numerous family; that it was consequently the duty of the farmer to marry; while the dwelling under tents, and in camps, and the hazards of war, required an unmarried man, whose courage was not to be enervated by any tender connection; who might live every where without any local predilection, and might expose his life every instant without regret: that the perfection of military discipline was lost without constant exercise, while the cultivation of the land, admitting of no rest, and suffering no intermission, except in that rigorous season which separated the armies, and hardened the soil, the same hands would be unfit to wield the sword and to direct the plough: that the two professions required each of them a great degree of experience, and that the uniting of them in the same person, was a sure method of having only indifferent farmers and bad soldiers: that these lands, thus distributed, must either become hereditary, or return to the state; if they were made hereditary, there would soon be none left for other proprietors; and if they returned to the state, this was the means of reducing to beggary, from one moment to another, a multiplicity of children of both sexes, and of peopling the kingdom, at the end of five or six campaigns, with unfortunate orphans: in a word, that the custom of the *bosfel* appeared to them so pernicious, that they did not hesitate to rank it among the number of causes that rendered a scarcity of corn so frequent in Sweden.

The situation of this country has determined it to create two very different naval corps; one consisting of a great number of galleys, and a few flat-bottomed boats, for the defence of its coasts, full of shoals; the other composed of four-and-twenty ships of the line, and three-and-twenty frigates, for more distant latitudes. In 1772, they were both of them in a most ruinous condition. Since that period, these vessels, most of which are made of deal, because there is very little oak in the country, and which were almost falling to pieces with age, have been repaired. Sweden may possibly be in absolute want of all her galleys; but she must infallibly determine to lessen the number of her ships. Her powers will never allow her to arm even half of them.

The public revenue of this kingdom does not exceed sixteen or seventeen millions of livres [from 666,666l. 13s. 4d.

to 708,333l. 6s. 8d.] It is collected by a land-tax, the returns of the customs, by duties upon copper, iron, and stamped paper, by a poll-tax, and a free gift; and by some other articles less considerable. This is very little for the wants of government; and yet its debts must be paid from this trifling sum.

These debts amounted to seven millions five hundred thousand livres [312,500l.] when Charles XI came to the crown. That prince, who was an economist in a manner, becoming a sovereign, paid them off. He did more than this, for he recovered several of the domains conquered in Germany, and which had been mortgaged to powerful neighbours. He likewise redeemed the crown jewels, upon which considerable sums had been borrowed in Holland. He fortified the frontier towns, succoured his allies, and often fitted out squadrons to maintain his superiority on the Baltic. The events subsequent to his death once more plunged the nation into its former confusion. This has since been always increasing, notwithstanding the subsidies bestowed by France, and other less considerable succours. In 1772, the state owed 90,450,000 livres [3,768,750l.] which, at an interest of four and a half per cent. brought to the natives, or foreigners, 4,070,250 livres [169,593l. 15s.] At this period there were not above two millions of livres [83,333l. 6s. 8d.] circulating in the kingdom. Both public and private affairs were transacted with the bills of a bank belonging to the state, and secured by the three first orders of the republic. This establishment has had its censors and its panegyrists; and it is a problem not yet resolved, whether it has been useful or detrimental to the nation.

Poverty is not, however, the greatest evil under which Sweden laboured; she was threatened with calamities of a more dangerous nature. The spirit of discord excited a general ferment. Hatred and revenge were the principal causes of events. Every man considered the state as the prey of his ambition or his avarice. It was no longer for the public service that places had been created: it was for the private emolument of those who filled them. Virtue and talents were rather an obstacle to fortune, than a means of elevation. The national assemblies displayed nothing but acts of disgrace or violence. Crimes were unpunished,

and were openly committed. The court, the senate, and all the orders of the republic, were filled with general distrust. All men were bent upon each others destruction, with inveterate fury. When quick and ready means were wanting, they were sought for at a distance; and men were not ashamed to conspire with foreign powers against their own country.

These evils had their source in the nature of the constitution settled in 1720. To a disgustful despotism, had been substituted a system of liberty ill arranged. The powers destined to balance and restrain each other, were neither clearly explained, nor prudently distributed. Accordingly, they began to clash with each other six years after they had been established. Nothing could possibly prevent this. It was a continual struggle between the head of the state, who was incessantly endeavouring to acquire influence by the making of laws, and the jealousy of the nation to preserve the executive power of them. The different orders of the republic disputed with the same inveteracy, concerning the extent of their respective privileges.

These contests, in which one party or the other alternately triumphed or were defeated, occasioned great instability in the public resolutions. What had been decreed in one diet, was cancelled in another, to be re-established anew, and to be again abolished. In this tumult of the passions, the general good was either forgotten, misunderstood, or betrayed. The happiness of the citizens was more and more disturbed; and all the branches of administration bore the stamp of ignorance, self-interest, or anarchy. These numerous evils were wrought up to their highest pitch, by a system of corruption, the most ignominious, perhaps, that any set of men was ever infected with.

Two factions, into which all the others were resolved, divided the state. That of the *hats* seemed intent upon restoring to Sweden its former strength, by recovering those rich possessions which had been severed from it by the misfortunes of war. This faction had devoted itself to France, which might have some interest in encouraging its ambitious views. The faction of the *caps* was a declared advocate for tranquillity. Its moderation had rendered it agreeable to Russia, which was desirous of meeting with no obstacles to

her enterprises. These two courts, especially that of Versailles, had opened their treasures to these base factions. The leaders of them appropriated to themselves the greatest part of these idle profusions ; and purchased votes with the rest. These were always at a low price ; but at the same time they were scarce ever to be relied upon. Nothing was more common than for a member of the diet to sell his vote a second time. It was not even an uncommon circumstance, that he should make himself be paid by both parties at the same time.

The unhappy situation of a state, apparently free, kept up that slavish disposition, which degrades most of the European nations ; they gloried in their chains, when they beheld the sufferings of a people who had shaken off theirs. No one would be convinced that the Swedes had gone from one extreme to another ; that, to avoid the mischief of arbitrary power, they had fallen into the confusions of anarchy. The laws had not provided means to reconcile the private rights of individuals with those of society, and the prerogatives it ought to enjoy for the common safety of its members.

In this fatal crisis, it was expedient for the Swedes to intrust the phantom of a king, of their own creation, with a power sufficient to inquire into the abuses of the state, and find out proper remedies for it. This is the greatest act of sovereignty a people can exercise ; and it is not losing their liberty to commit it to the custody of a guardian in whom they can confide, while they watch over the use he makes of the power delegated to him.

Such a resolution would have raised the Swedes to the greatest glory and happiness, and have excited a general opinion of their understanding and wisdom ; whereas, by declining so necessary a measure, they have compelled the sovereign to seize upon the supreme authority. He now reigns upon his own terms ; and his subjects have no other right left, but such as his moderation would not suffer him to deprive them of.

This event is too recent to allow us to entertain our readers with an account of it. Time alone can reveal what an historian ought to know, in order to speak of it with accuracy. How shall we discriminate those who have seconded the views of the sovereign from generous motives, from

those who have acceded to them from abject principles? He himself undoubtedly knows them: but the heart of kings is an impenetrable sanctuary, out of which the marks of esteem or contempt seldom shew themselves during their lifetime; and the key of which is but too frequently lost at their death. Besides, are not kings subject, as we are, to the illusions of the passions, and do they know better how to distribute censure or praise? The opinions of their subjects are equally suspicious. Among the confused and contradictory voices that are heard at the same time, who shall distinguish the cry of truth from the deep and secret murmur of calumny, or the mysterious reserve of the former from the clamour of the latter? We must wait till interest and flattery have ceased to explain themselves, and till silence is no longer imposed upon us from terror. Then we may be allowed to take up the pen, without incurring the suspicion of meanly paying our court to the man in power, or of insolently bidding defiance to his authority. Though we should be silent, posterity will speak. The monarch is sensible of this truth. Happy, if he can enjoy beforehand its approbation! But woe to him, and woe to his people, if he should disdain this tribunal!

Let us now inquire into the connections, formed in India by the king of Prussia.

The king of Prussia forms an East-India company at Embden.

THIS prince, in his younger years, wisely preferred the advantage of treasuring up knowledge, to the usual pleasures of his age, and the luxurious idleness of courts. An intercourse with the greatest men of his time, joined to the spirit of observation, insensibly ripened his genius, which was naturally active and eager for improvement. Neither flattery nor opposition could ever divert him from the deep reflections he was engaged in. He formed the plan of his future conduct and reign in the early part of his life. It was foretold, on his accession to the crown, that his ministers would be no more than his secretaries; the managers of his finances no more than his clerks; and his generals no more than his aids de camp. Some fortunate circumstances afforded him an opportunity of displaying to the whole world the talents he had acquired in retirement. With a

quickness peculiar to himself, Frederick, instantly discovering the plan it was his interest to pursue, attacked a power by which his ancestors had been kept in slavery. He obtained the victory in five engagements against that power, deprived it of its best provinces, and concluded a peace with the same wisdom that he had begun the war.

Though his wars were at an end, yet he did not remain inactive. He aspired to gain the admiration of those very people whom he had struck with terror. He collected all the arts about him, to give an additional lustre to his name. He reformed the abuses in the courts of judicature, and dictated himself the wisest laws. A plain and invariable order was established in every part of government. As he was convinced that the authority of a sovereign is a common benefit to all his subjects, a protection which all should equally partake of, he gave to every man the liberty of approaching his person, and of writing to him. Every instant of his life was devoted to the welfare of his people; his very amusements were made useful to them. His writings on history, morality, and politics, abounded with practical truths. Even his poetry was full of profound and instructive ideas. He was considering of the means of enriching his dominions, when some fortunate event put him in possession of East Friesland, in the year 1744.

Embsen, the capital of this little province, was reckoned, two centuries ago, one of the best ports in Europe. The English, compelled to abandon Antwerp, had made it the centre of their connections with the continent. The Dutch had long attempted, though in vain, to appropriate it to themselves, till it so strongly excited their jealousy, that they even endeavoured to fill up the port. It was in every respect fit to become the staple of a great trade. The distance of this little country from the bulk of the Prussian forces might be attended with some inconveniences; but Frederick expected that the terror of his name would keep the maritime powers in awe. In his persuasion, he established an East India company at Embsen in 1751.

The capital of this new society, divided into two thousand shares, was 3,956,000 livres [164,833l. 6s. 8d.] chiefly subscribed by the English and Dutch, notwithstanding the severe prohibitions of their governments. They were allured by the unlimited freedom they were to enjoy, on

paying three per cent. to the sovereign upon every sale they should make. The event did not answer their expectation; six ships, sent successively to China, brought to the owners no more than their bare capital, and a profit of half per cent. for each year. Another company, formed soon after in the same place for Bengal, was still more unsuccessful. They never attempted more than two expeditions; and the only return they had was a law-suit, which probably will never be determined. The transactions of both these societies were suspended upon the commencement of hostilities in 1756, but their final dissolution was not settled till 1763.

This has been the only check the king of Prussia's greatness has ever received. We know how difficult it is to judge of the merit of contemporaries; because they are not at a sufficient distance. Princes are of all men those we can least hope to be acquainted with. Fame seldom speaks of them without prejudice. We commonly judge of them upon the reports of servile flattery, or unjust envy. The clamours of the various interests and opinions, that are in perpetual agitation around them, confound or suspend the judgment of the wisest men.

Yet, if we might be allowed to pronounce from a multitude of facts connected together, we should say of Frederick, that he had been able to extricate himself from the schemes of all Europe combined against him; that to the greatness and boldness of his enterprises, he joined the most impenetrable secrecy in the execution of them; that he introduced a total change in the art of war, which, before his time, was thought to have attained its highest degree of perfection; that he shewed a fortitude scarcely to be paralleled in history; that he turned his very mistakes to better advantage than others do their success; that all mankind were either lost in silent admiration of his actions, or could not sufficiently extol them; and that he reflected as much lustre upon his nation as other nations reflect upon their sovereign.

This prince always presents a formidable aspect. The opinion he has given of his abilities; the indelible remembrance of his actions; an annual revenue of seventy millions [2,916,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] a treasure of more than two hundred [8,333,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] an army of a hundred and

fourſcore thouſand men : all theſe circumſtances muſt ſecure his tranquillity. Unfortunately it is not ſo beneficial to his ſubjects as it was formerly. He ſtill leaves the management of the coin to the Jews, who have introduced the greateſt confuſion. He has done nothing for the relief of the richeſt merchants in his dominions, who have been ruined by his ſchemes. He has taken the moſt conſiderable manufactures into his own hands. His dominions are full of monopolies, which are the bane of all induſtry. His people, who idolized him, have been given up to a ſet of foreign plunderers. This conduct hath occaſioned ſuch diſtruſt, both at home and abroad, that we may venture to affirm, that all endeavours to reſtore the Embden company will prove ineffectual.

O Frederick ! thou didſt receive from nature a bold and lively imagination, and unbounded deſire of knowledge, a propenſity to an active life, and a ſtrength of conſtitution to ſupport the fatigues of it. Thine earlier years were devoted to the ſtudy of government, policy, and legiſlation. At the view of thy firſt exploits, mankind, groaning under general oppreſſion and ſlavery, ſeemed to find ſome comfort in their miſfortunes, from the expectation that thou wouldſt be their avenger. They foretold thy ſucceſſes, and implored a previous bleſſing upon them ; and Europe diſtinguiſhed thee by the title of king and philoſopher.

When thou didſt firſt appear in the field, all nations were aſtoniſhed at the rapidity of thy marches, at the ſkill diſplayed in thy encampments, and at the excellent diſpoſition thou didſt make of thine army in battle. The ſtrict diſcipline in which thy troops were trained excited univerſal admiration, and inſured them victory : all extolled that mechanical ſubordination which of ſeveral armies makes but one body, whoſe motions, being all governed by one ſingle impulſe, exert their power at once towards the ſame object. Philoſophers themſelves, prejudiced by the hopes thou hadſt raiſed in them, and proud to ſee a friend of the arts and of mankind inveſted with regal dignity, rejoiced perhaps at thy victories, though obtained at the expence of ſo much blood ; and they conſidered thee as a model for military kings.

But there is ſtill a more glorious title ; that of a patriot

king. This is a title never given to those princes, who, making no distinction between truth and error, justice and partiality, good and evil, consider the principles of morality merely as metaphysical speculations, and imagine that human reason is swayed entirely by interest. If the love of glory were extinct in thy breast; if the powers of thy soul, exhausted by thy great exploits, had lost their force and energy; if the childish passions of old age had reduced thee to a level with the generality of kings; what would then become of thy glory? What would become of those praises which fame, and the immortal testimony of literature and the arts, have bestowed upon thee? But let us hope that thy reign and thy life will not appear problematical in history. Let thine heart again be opened to those noble and virtuous sentiments that were the delight of thy younger days. Let the latter years of thy life be employed in promoting the felicity of thy people. Let succeeding generations experience the effects of that happiness thou shalt bestow upon the present. The power of Prussia is the work of thy genius; it has been formed, and it must be supported by thee. It must be adapted to the state, the glory of which thou hast raised.

Let those numberless treasures that are buried in thy coffers be again brought into circulation, and give new life to the state: let thy private possessions, which a sudden change of fortune may deprive thee of, be hereafter only supported upon the basis of the national riches, which never can fail: let thy subjects, bending under the intolerable yoke of a severe and arbitrary government, find in thee the affections of a parent, instead of the vexations of an oppressor: let exorbitant taxes upon individuals, and upon articles of consumption, no longer obstruct the advancement of agriculture and industry: let the inhabitants of the country, recovered from a state of slavery, and those of the towns, becoming perfectly free, pass their lives agreeably to their inclinations and respective powers. Thus shalt thou give stability to the empire which thy brilliant talents have extended, and rendered illustrious; thus shall thy name be inserted in the respectable, but small, list of patriot kings.

Let thy virtues carry thee still further, and induce thee to procure the blessing of tranquillity to the earth. Let the influence of thy mediation, and the power of thine

arms, compel all turbulent and restless nations to accept of peace. The universe is the country of a great man ; it is the stage suited to the display of thy abilities : mayest thou become the benefactor of all mankind !

Such was the discourse I addressed to thee in the midst of that tranquillity in which thou didst flatter thyself that thou shouldst end thine honourable career : like the Eternal Being, if we may be allowed to say so, to whom songs of praise are addressed from all regions of the earth, when a great event made thee resume thy thunder. A power, which never consulted any thing but its own aggrandizement in its motives for making peace or war ; without any regard to the constitution of the Germanic body, or to the treaties that guarantee it ; without respect to the rights of nations and of families ; and in contempt of the customary and general laws of inheritance ; this power, I say, formed pretensions, assembled troops, appropriated to itself, in imagination, the spoils of princes too feeble to resist, and threatened the liberties of the empire. Thou hast prevented these evils. The old lion hath shaken his mane ; he hath issued roaring from the place of his retreat, and his young rival hath shuddered. Till this instant, Frederick had shewn himself powerful. The opportunity has offered of shewing himself just, and he hath seized it. Europe has resounded with prayers for the success of his exertions ; for he was then neither an ambitious conqueror, nor a rapacious merchant, nor a political usurper. He had been admired ; he now shall be blessed. I had written at the foot of his statue : THE MOST FORMIDABLE POWERS OF EUROPE WERE COMEINED AGAINST HIM ; AND THEY DISAPPEARED BEFORE HIM. I shall now engrave an inscription less pompous, but more instructive and more noble. NATIONS, HE BROKE THE CHAINS THAT WERE PREPARING FOR YOU. PRINCES OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE, HE WILL NOT ALWAYS EXIST—LOOK TO YOURSELVES.

No greatness, no prosperity can exist in a monarchy without the influence of the sovereign ; but it does not solely depend upon the monarch to do every thing that is calculated to procure the happiness of his people. He sometimes meets with powerful obstacles in the prejudi-

ces, the character, and the dispositions of his subjects. These indeed may undoubtedly be corrected ; but this is a revolution we often expect for a long time, and which has not yet taken place in the Philippines.

The Philippines, formerly known by the name of the Manillas, form an immense archipelago to the east of Asia. They extend from the sixth to the twenty-fifth degree north, and have an unequal breadth, spread from forty to two hundred leagues. Among the number of them, which is prodigious, thirteen or fourteen are distinguished more considerable than the rest.

These islands present to the observing eye, a terrible and majestic prospect. They are covered with basalt, with lava, with scorice, with black glass, with melted iron, with gray and friable stones filled with the wrecks of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, with sulphur kept in a state of fusion by the continual action of subterraneous fires, and with burning waters which communicate with hidden flames. All these great accidents of nature are the effect of extinguished volcanos, of some that are still burning, and of others that are forming in these deep cavities, where combustible materials are always in agitation. We may conjecture without presumption, that these countries, which may be reckoned among the most ancient of the globe, are approaching nearer to their destruction than any others.

The ashes, with which these immense furnaces cover the surface of a deep soil for ages past ; the stirring up of the ground incessantly renewed by earthquakes ; the heats that are common to all the countries situated under the torrid zone ; the moisture, which is habitually kept up in these regions by the proximity of the ocean, by the height of the mountains, and by forests as old as the world : such are probably the causes of the almost incredible fertility of the Philippines. Most of the birds, quadrupeds, plants, fruits, and trees that are found in the rest of Asia, are also seen in this archipelago, and almost every thing here is of a better quality. Some vegetables even are discovered here, which do not appear anywhere else. If an intelligent naturalist were to go over these islands with the freedom and the assistance necessary, he would certainly enrich the sciences with a variety of curious, useful, and interesting knowledge.

Unfortunately, the climate of the Philippines is not so agreeable as the soil is fertile. Although the sea and land breezes may keep up, during six months, a greater degree of temperature than might be expected from their situation, yet throughout the rest of the year, the sky is all on fire with lightning, and the fields are deluged with continual rains. Nevertheless, the air is not unwholesome. The constitution indeed of foreigners is rather weakened by a superabundant perspiration: but the natives of the country live to an advanced age, without being exposed to any infirmities except such as man is liable to everywhere else.

The centre of these mountainous islands is occupied by savages, who seem to be the oldest inhabitants. Whatever may be their origin, they are negroes, and have most of them woolly hair. They are not tall, but are strong and nervous. Sometimes a whole family forms itself into a little community; but most frequently each individual lives with his female companion alone. They never quit their bows and arrows. Accustomed to the silence of the forests, they seem alarmed at the least noise. Their life is entirely the same as that of beasts. The fruits and roots they find in the woods are there only food; and, when they have exhausted one spot, they go and inhabit another. All endeavours to reduce them to subjection have proved ineffectual, because nothing is more difficult than to subdue a nation wandering among places that are inaccessible.

The plains from which they have been driven, have been successively inhabited by colonies from Malaca, Siam, Sumatra, Borneo, Macassar, the Moluccas, and Arabia. The manners, idiom, religion, and government, of these strangers, evidently distinguish their several origins.

MAGELLAN was the first European who discovered these islands. Upon some discontent, he left Portugal, his native country, and entered into the service of the emperor Charles V, and passing the straits that now bear his name, he arrived at the Manillas in 1521; from whence, after his death, his lieutenants repaired to the Moluccas, discovered ten or eleven years before by the Portuguese. This voyage would probably have been attended with remarkable consequences,

*The Spaniards
and Portuguese
dispute the pos-
session of the
Philippines.*

had they not been prevented by the combination we are going to mention.

In the fifteenth century, while the Portuguese were beginning to make voyages to the East Indies, and endeavouring to monopolize the trade of spices, and of manufactures which had been in constant request among civilized nations; the Spaniards, by the discovery of America, were securing greater treasures than imagination could form any conception of. Though both nations were pursuing their respective views of aggrandizement in far distant regions, they might probably interfere with each other; and their mutual antipathy would have made such an event dangerous. To prevent this, the pope fixed their respective claims in 1493, in consequence of that universal and ridiculous power which the Roman pontiffs had assumed for several centuries, and which the idolatrous ignorance of the two nations, equally superstitious, still kept up, that they might plead the excuse of religion for their avarice. He gave to Spain all the countries that should be discovered to the west of a meridian taken a hundred leagues from the Azores, and to Portugal whatever land they might conquer to the east of that meridian. The year following, the powers concerned agreed among themselves, at Tordefillas, to remove the line of separation to the distance of three hundred and seventy leagues from the Cape de Verd islands. This, in the eyes of the most intelligent people, was a superfluous precaution. But, at that period, men were not sufficiently acquainted with the theory of the earth, to know, that, as the navigators of one crown advanced to the west, and those of the other to the east, they must, sooner or later, meet in the same point. Magellan's expedition evinced this truth.

The court of Lisbon did not conceal the uneasiness they felt at this event. They were determined to run any risk, rather than suffer a rival, already too much favoured by fortune, to come and dispute with them the empire of the Asiatic seas. However, before they ventured to contend with the only power whose naval strength was then formidable, they thought it advisable to try the method of negociation; and succeeded better in it than they expected. Charles V, who was frequently in want of money to carry on his too immense and too frequent undertakings, gave up

irrevocably, in 1529, for the sum of 350,000 ducats, or 2,598,750 livres [108,181l. 15s.] all the pretensions he might have upon the countries recognised under his name in the Indian ocean: he even extended the Portuguese line of separation to the Ladrone islands. This is at least the account given by the Portuguese historians; for the Castilian writers say, that their monarch reserved to himself the power of renewing the discussion of his rights, and of resuming them if the decision should be in his favour: but only after he had refunded the money he had received.

The treaty of Saragossa met with the same fate as other political conventions.

IN 1564, Philip II resumed the project of conquering the Manillas. Spain was then too much weakened by her conquests in America, to think of founding, by force, a new empire at the extremity of the East Indies. The mild methods of persuasion were for the first time adopted in her plan of aggrandizement. She charged several missionaries with the office of acquiring new subjects for her, and they did not entirely frustrate her expectations.

The Spaniards form settlements at the Philip-pines.

The men upon the coasts, who were formerly idolators or mohammedans, and who were made subject to Spain by the christian religion, were not entirely savages, as those of the inland parts. They had chiefs, laws, houses, and some imperfect arts. Several of them had some knowledge of agriculture. The property of the fields they had sown was confirmed to them; and the happiness they enjoyed made others desirous of acquiring possessions. The monks, commissioned to distribute them, reserved for themselves the most extensive, best situated, and most fertile portions of this immense territory; and the government made a formal cession of these lands to them.

Great things were expected from these arrangements, imperfect even as they were. Many causes have combined to prevent the success of them.

In the first place, most of the missionaries, brought up in the ignorance and indolence of a cloistered life, have not spurred on the Indians under their direction to labour as much as they ought to have done. It may even be said,

that they have diverted them from it by employing them incessantly in religious ceremonies, meetings, and solemnities. A system, as repugnant to every kind of rational worship, as to sound policy, has left the lands distributed to the subjected people in a state of annihilation. Even the lands of their blind guides have been little or ill cultivated; and this, perhaps, because the government distributes 525,000 livres [21,875*l.*] annually to these monks.

The conduct of the Spaniards has always encouraged this fatal inactivity. The propensity to idleness which these proud men had brought with them from their country, was still more confirmed by the permission which the court granted them, of sending every year to America a ship laden with the productions and manufactures of Asia. The treasures which were brought back by this immense vessel, made them consider the most creditable and least laborious occupations as disgraceful and insupportable. Their indolence suggested no other resource to keep up a voluptuous life. Accordingly, when the misfortunes of war suspended for a year or two the fitting out of this galleon, most of these conquerors were plunged in the most dreadful misery. They became beggars, thieves, or assassins. The troops were participators in these enormities, and the tribunals of justice were ineffectual against so many crimes.

The Chinese naturally presented themselves to give to the arts, and to agriculture, that activity which the laziness and the pride of the Spaniards denied them. The navigators of this celebrated nation frequented from time immemorial the Manillas, to obtain the productions natural to these islands. They continued to resort to them after they had submitted to a foreign yoke. Their numbers increased still more, when the riches of Mexico and Peru, which circulated there, gave room for more extensive speculations. A great number of artists, and a still greater number of cultivators, who were too numerous in this flourishing empire, were soon brought there by their ships. These laborious, economical, and intelligent men, offered to clear the lands, to establish manufactures, and to set on foot every species of industry, upon condition that the property of some parts of an immense territory, which had no owner, should be given to them, and that the tributes exacted from them should be moderate. This was an infallible me-

thod of establishing, at the extremity of Asia, a flourishing colony, without loss of men, and without any pecuniary sacrifice. Unfortunately for the Philippines, the Spaniards have not been sufficiently sensible of this truth; nevertheless, the little good that has been done in these islands has been the work of these Chinese.

SPAIN has submitted to its dominion in this archipelago some parts of nine large islands. That of Luconia, which is the most considerable, is five-and-twenty leagues in length, and thirty or forty in breadth. The Spaniards land there at a great circular bay, formed by two capes, at the distance of two leagues from each other. In this short space, we meet with the small island of Marivelles, which leaves two passages open; the eastern one is the narrowest and the safest.

To the south-east of the bay stands the harbour of Cavite, which is in form of a horse-shoe, and is defended by a small fort, and a garrison of three hundred men. Twelve ships may ride here in safety upon a slimy bottom. Here it is that the vessels necessary for the service of the colony are constructed.

In the same bay, at three leagues distance from Cavite, near the mouth of a navigable river, rises the famous city of Manilla. L'Egase, who took it from the Indians in 1571, judged it a proper place to become the centre of the state that was to be founded, and fixed the seat of government and commerce there. Gomes Peres de las Marignas enclosed it with walls in 1590, and built the citadel of St. James. The city has been since enlarged and embellished. The river, which traverses it, descends from a lake that is twenty leagues in circumference. It is formed by forty rivulets, upon each of which is settled a colony of Indian cultivators. It is from hence that the capital of the empire received its subsistence. Unfortunately it is situated between two volcanos which communicate with one another, and the cavities of which, always in fermentation, seem to pave the way for its ruin.

According to the calculation of 1752, throughout the whole archipelago, there are no more than one million three hundred and fifty thousand Indians who have sub-

mitted to the Spanish yoke. Most of them are christians ; and from the age of sixteen to fifty, they all pay a poll-tax of four reals, or two livres fourteen sols [2s. 3d.] They have been distributed in twenty-two provinces, of which the island of Luconia alone, though not entirely subdued, contains twelve.

The settlement is subject to a governor, whose office continues eight years, but who is subordinate to the viceroy of Mexico. He commands the army, disposes of all civil and military employments, and may grant lands to the soldiers, and even erect them into fiefs. This power, though only balanced by the influence of the clergy, has been found so dangerous, that many expedients have been devised to check its exorbitancy. The most effectual of these expedients, is that, by which it is decreed, that the conduct of a governor shall be arraigned even after his death ; and that, when a governor lives beyond the time of the expiration of his office, he shall not quit the place till his administration has been inquired into. Every individual is at liberty to complain ; and, if has suffered any wrong, he is to be indemnified at the cost of the delinquent, who is likewise condemned to pay a fine to the sovereign, for having brought an odium upon him. At the time this wise institution was made, it was observed with such rigour, that, when accusations were of importance against the governor, he was imprisoned. Several died in confinement ; and others were taken out, only with a design to inflict severe punishments upon them. By degrees this formidable mode of proceeding has come to nothing. The chief of the colony gives his successor enough to pay for his post ; he having already received the same sum from his predecessor.

This collusion has brought on a settled system of oppression. Arbitrary taxes have been levied ; the public revenue has been lessened in passing through the hands that were appointed to collect it ; a duty of seven per cent. which has been laid on all merchandize on its coming in, has made trade degenerate into smuggling ; the farmer has been compelled to lay up his crops in the magazines of the government ; and some governors have carried their tyranny to such atrocious lengths, as to determine the quantity of corn that the fields were to produce, and to oblige the

farmers to bring it in ; and not only to wait for the payment as long a time as their oppressive masters should think proper, but also to receive it in whatever manner it could be given to them. For these two centuries past, some upright governors have attempted to put an end to these enormities ; but their endeavours have proved ineffectual, because the abuses were too inveterate to yield to a transient and subordinate authority. Nothing less than the supreme power of the court of Madrid could have restrained this spirit of universal rapaciousness ; but this power has never exerted itself for such a purpose. This shameful neglect is the true cause why the Philippine islands have never been in the least improved. Their name would scarcely be known, were it not for their connections with Mexico.

Those connections, which have subsisted ever since the first settlement of the Spaniards in the East and West Indies, consist only in conveying the merchandize of India to America by the South sea. None of the articles that compose these rich cargoes are the produce either of the soil or of the industry of those islands. Their cinnamon is brought from Batavia. The Chinese bring them silks ; and the English or the French supply them with white linens and printed calicoes from Bengal and Coromandel. From whatever port the goods have been brought, they must come in before the departure of the galleons. If they should arrive later, they could not be disposed of, or must be sold at a loss to merchants, who are obliged to shut them up in warehouses, till they are forgotten. The payments are made in cochineal and Mexican piastres, and partly in cowries, which are not current in Africa, but will pass every where on the banks of the Ganges.

A SETTLEMENT which has not a more solid foundation may perhaps be easily overthrown. We do not therefore hesitate to foretel, that the Philippines will one day, sooner or later, be taken from its present possessors. A few reflections will be sufficient to give these conjectures the conviction of evidence.

Dangers to which the Philippines are exposed.

Some enlightened navigators have informed us, that the Spanish possessions, which in these distant regions had always been in a languid state, are become perceptibly

more so since the year 1768, when the jesuits were banished from them. Besides that the immense domains of these missionaries are entirely fallen off from the fertility to which they had brought them; the lands of the Indians likewise whom they governed, which were the only ones tolerably cultivated, and where some useful arts were to be found, have sunk again into that state of annihilation from whence they had been raised. It has even happened that these islanders, the least indolent persons of the colony, have been exposed to the same odium, well or ill founded, which pursued their guides.

A greater calamity affected this archipelago the next year. All the Chinese, without exception, were banished from it; and this proscription occasioned a breach, which, in all probability, will be closed. These people, whose ruling passion is avarice, came every year to the Philippines with five-and-twenty or thirty small vessels, and gave encouragement to some labours to which they alone could fix a price. These were not the only advantages. A number of their countrymen, settled in these islands, gave an habitual example of a life constantly spent in employment. Several of them even visited the Indian colonies, and, by making them timely and cautious advances, inspired them with the desire, at the same time that they furnished them with the means, of improving their situation. It is to be regretted, that these means of prosperity have been annihilated, by the impossibility which the Spaniards perhaps experienced, of retaining a people so prone to insurrections.

Before these destructive events, the people manifested a determined aversion for their tyrants. Oppression had often made them break through the bounds of obedience; and without the intervention of their pastors, the unavailing efforts of degenerate troops would never have brought them again into subjection. Since the expulsion of these missionaries, who had most influence over them, has deprived the Spanish government of its greatest strength, the Indians, who are less restrained, must be desirous of recovering their independence, and may have, perhaps, sufficient energy to re-assume their primitive rights.

To these dangers, which may be called domestic, foreign perils are added, which are still more alarming. Some savages, issuing from the Malay islands, make habitual in-

curlions on the coast of the Philippines, carrying destruction along with them, and taking off thousands of the christians, whom they reduce to slavery. This piracy is seldom punished; because the Spaniards, divided into four factions, known by the name of Castilians, Galicians, Mountaineers, and Biscayans, are entirely taken up with the hatred that torments them, and behold, with an indifferent eye, whatever is foreign to their disputes. The Malays have always been more and more emboldened by these divisions. Already have they driven the common enemy from several islands. They are every day encroaching upon them, and will soon become masters of the possession, unless they be prevented by some European nation, more powerful or more active than the one they now have to contend with.

In 1762, the English got possession of the Philippines with more facility than they had expected. Although they were deprived of them by treaty, they may perhaps be still ambitious of seizing upon them again, when an opportunity shall offer. Other nations may equally aspire to this conquest, in order to make it the centre of their empire in the seas and upon the continent of India. It is therefore probable that the Spaniards will be driven from the Philippines.

Some politicians think that this would not be an evil; an opinion that has long been entertained. The Philippines had but just opened a communication with America, when the Spaniards thought of giving them up, as being prejudicial to the interest of the mother-country. Philip II and his successors constantly rejected that proposal, which was often renewed. The city of Seville in 1731, and that of Cadiz in 1733, entertained more rational notions. Both these cities imagined, and it is rather surprising that the idea did not occur sooner, that it would be advantageous to the Spaniards to have a direct concern with the trade of Asia, and that the possessions they had in those parts should be made the centre of their traffic. In vain was it urged, that as India affords silks and cottons superior to those of Europe, both in workmanship and colouring, and at a much cheaper price, the national manufactures could not support the competition, but would infallibly be ruined. This objection might have its weight with regard to some nations;

but appeared altogether frivolous, considering the situation of Spain.

Advantages that might be made of the Philippines. THE Spaniards, indeed, use none but foreign stuffs and linen, either for wearing apparel or furniture. Those continual demands must necessarily increase the industry, the wealth, the population, and strength of their neighbours; who avail themselves of these advantages to keep that nation which supplies them in a state of dependence. They would certainly act with more wisdom and dignity, were they to use the Indian manufactures. They would be preferable, both in point of economy and elegance, and would lessen that competition which must, in the end, prove fatal to Spain.

The inconveniences which usually attend new undertakings are here previously obviated. The islands which Spain possesses lie between Japan, China, Cochin China, Siam, Borneo, Celebes, and the Moluccas, and are favourably situated for forming connections with those several kingdoms. Their distance, from Malabar, Coromandel, and Bengal, would not prevent them from protecting effectually any factories it might be thought advantageous to establish on these industrious coasts. They would, moreover, be defended by immense seas from the ravages which so often affect the continent, and would be easily preserved from the temptation of interfering in the contests which prevail there.

This distance, however, would not prevent the archipelago from being sure of subsistence. No country in Asia abounds more in fruits, sago, cocoa trees, and esculent plants of all kinds. Rice, which in the greater part of India must be watered by dint of labour twice a day, till its grain is well formed, is more easily cultivated in the Philippines. When it is sown on the borders of rivers, or in plains which may be covered with water at pleasure, it yields two plentiful crops in a year, without requiring any attention, till the time of gathering it.

All the grains of Europe thrive in these islands. They would furnish a sufficiency of them for the sailors, however numerous they might be, if the negligence and tyranny of

the government had not condemned most of the lands to a shameful sterility.

The number of cattle on these islands is a matter of astonishment to all voyagers. Every religious community has meadows from five-and-twenty to thirty leagues in extent, covered with forty or fifty thousand oxen. Although they are not watched, they seldom get beyond the rivers and mountains which are the boundaries of these possessions. Those which happen to go astray, are easily known again, by the mark of the different orders, which is impressed on them with a hot iron, and they are always faithfully restored to their proper owners. Since the invasion of the English, and the ravages that were the consequence of it, the number of horned cattle is lessened; but it is still very considerable.

Before the year 1744, none of our vegetables grew on the fertile soil of the Philippines. At this period Malé de Villebague carried some seeds there. All these useful plants had succeeded, when eight months after, the cultivator, who was called away elsewhere by his commercial concerns, left his garden to another Frenchman settled in these islands. The Spaniards, who had not without jealousy seen a foreigner shew them what they ought to have done two centuries before, rose up with so much violence against his successor, that in order to restore tranquillity, the administration thought themselves obliged to order these wholesome roots to be pulled up. Fortunately, the Chinese, who are incessantly intent upon every thing that can contribute to the improvement of their fortune, had privately taken care of them. By degrees the people grew reconciled to an innovation of so useful a kind; and it is at present one of the chief resources of the colony.

Such is then one of the effects of national hatred, that it inclines the natives rather to deprive themselves of a benefit, than to owe it to strangers; and particularly to the French, who of all other nations are the most detested, notwithstanding the connection subsisting between the two governments. From whence can this antipathy arise?

If we travel much, we shall not find any people so mild, so affable, so frank, so polite, so lively, so gallant, as the French. They are sometimes too much so; but is this so

Hitherto, sugar has been only cultivated for the consumption of the colony. The apprehensions of having its price a little raised, has occasioned the exportation of it to be prohibited, with heavy penalties. This erroneous system cannot last. Permission will soon be obtained to furnish the greatest part of Asia with a production, for which the soil of the Philippines is extremely favourable. Iron will be an additional object of the trade of these islands.

This metal abounds, and is of superior quality, throughout the whole archipelago. Nevertheless, none of the mines had yet been opened, till about the year 1768, when Simon de Auda fortunately thought of establishing forges. The success would have been more certain, if this active governor had not begun too many undertakings at once; if his projects had been more maturely considered; and if he had employed, to bring them to perfection, methods more conformable to the principles of humanity and justice.

The excellent copper which is dispersed over several of the Philippine islands, is not less worthy of the attention of government. This metal is employed in India for the vessels used in public worship, for ordinary utensils, for coins, which must be incessantly renewed, because the people are as eager to bury them, as rich men are to conceal more precious treasures under ground. The Dutch draw from Japan what is necessary to supply all these wants. They will necessarily lose this branch of their trade, if the Spaniards, awakened from their lethargy, should venture to dispute it with them.

The Philippines have, above the other European colonies, the advantage of possessing gold. The Indians find some particles of it in the sand and slime of the rivers, which carry it along with their streams. The quantity they collect may amount to five or six hundred thousand livres [from 20,833l. 6s. 8d. to 25,000l.] per annum. They deliver it in private to some foreign navigators, who in return supply them with merchandize. Formerly it was sent into America, for Cavendish found to the value of 658,800 livres [27,450l.] of it, upon the galleon that was sailing towards Mexico. If Spain, foregoing its ancient maxims, should encourage this species of industry, by leaving to those who should devote themselves to it the free use of the

riches it would produce, would not that kingdom secure to itself an additional resource for trading to advantage in the Indian seas?

It would not be reduced to the necessity of desiring that foreign navigators should come in quest of the productions of these islands. As the Philippines furnish plenty of materials for a well-established navy, its subjects might frequent all the markets, and add the benefit of freighting to their other advantages.

This activity would pave the way for the communication between this and the mother-country. In the present confused state of the Philippines, it is not easy to foresee what they may one day furnish to Spain. It now procures from thence alum, buffaloes' hides, cassia, woods for dying, saltpetre, tortoise-shell; and mother-of-pearl, which the Chinese have bought up, in order to sell it again to the Europeans at Canton, for three times the price they have given for it; cacao, which, though brought from Mexico, has not degenerated; and indigo, which the bounty of nature produces spontaneously. An enlightened man was desirous of attempting, in 1750, to give this rich plant every improvement it might receive from cultivation. This novelty met with a general and violent opposition. The marquis d'Obando, who was governor at that period, was obliged to take this citizen under his protection, and assigned him an inclosed territory, where he might carry on his operations with safety. The experiments were all extremely successful; and since this event, the cultivation of this precious dye has been attended to, though not with sufficient industry.

If an indolence peculiar to the Spaniards had not impeded their progress in every thing, they would have naturalized the spices, two centuries ago, upon this territory, so contiguous to the Moluccas. Perhaps they might have shared with the Dutch this source of wealth. It will be committing a new fault, to defer any longer an experiment, the greatest inconvenience of which is, that of its being useless.

This government might also be prompted, by the excellent quality of the cotton cultivated in the Philippines, to establish there, with the assistance of the inhabitants of the continent, beautiful and numerous manufactures. While they were waiting for the success, which, in new undertak-

ings, however well planned, is always slow, the Spaniards would purchase in foreign markets the silks, calicoes, and other articles of the produce of Asia, suitable to their country, and would obtain them at a lower price than their competitors. All the nations in Europe employ the silver they get from America to trade with in India. Before this precious metal can reach the place of its destination, it must have paid considerable duties, taken a prodigious compass, and have been exposed to great risks; whereas the Spaniards, by sending it directly from America to the Philippines, would save duties, time, and insurance; so that while they furnished the same sum as the rival nations, they would in reality make their purchases at a cheaper rate.

If the simple plan we have traced out should ever be carried into execution, the Spaniards, who are settled in Asia, would necessarily, and forever emerge from that indolent state of dissolution, in which they have languished for two centuries. The subdued people would bless a government that was become equitable; and those who are still contending for their independence, would submit, in multitudes, to the controul of wise laws. The neighbouring nations, whom pride or injustice have driven from the ports frequented by their forefathers, would again direct their ships into harbours, where industry and harmony were united. The European merchants, who are oppressed with the fetters of monopoly upon the Indian seas, would carry their activity, their knowledge, and their stock, into an asylum of happiness and liberty. The colony, the revenues of which amount to 2,728,000 livres [113,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] would no longer cost Spain annually 527,500 livres [21,979*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*] and would become one of the finest settlements in the world.

This revolution can never be effected by an exclusive company. For these two centuries past, since the Europeans have frequented the seas of Asia, they have never been animated by a truly laudable spirit. In vain have society, morality, and politics, been improved amongst us; those distant countries have only been witnesses of our rapaciousness, our restlessness, and our tyranny. The mischief we have done to other parts of the world has sometimes been compensated by the knowledge we have imparted, and the wise institutions we have established: but the Indians have

still continued under their former darkness and despotism; and we have taken no pains to rescue them from those dreadful calamities. Had the several governments directed the steps of their free traders, it is probable that the love of glory would have been united to a passion for riches, and that some nations would have made attempts capable of rendering their names illustrious. Such noble and disinterested intentions could never be pursued by any company of merchants; who, being confined by the narrow views of present profit, have never employed their thoughts about the happiness of the people with whom they traded; a circumstance which, being naturally expected, hath never been imputed to them as a crime.

How much would it redound to the honour of Spain, to shew a sensibility for the interests of mankind, and to endeavour to promote them! That nation now begins to shake off the fetters of prejudice, which have kept it in a state of infancy, notwithstanding its natural strength. Its subjects are not yet degraded and corrupted by the contagion of riches, from which they have been happily preserved by their own indolence, and by the rapaciousness of their government. These people must necessarily be inclined to what is good; they are capable of knowing it, and no doubt would practise it, having all the means in their power from the possessions their conquests have given them in the richest countries of the universe. Their ships, sailing from their several ports, might either meet at the Canary islands, or separately proceed to their several destinations, and thus be the means of procuring happiness to the remotest parts of Asia. They might return from India by the Cape of Good Hope; but would go thither by the South sea, where the sale of their cargoes would greatly increase their capitals. This advantage would secure to them a superiority over their competitors, who sail with false bills of lading, seldom carrying any thing but silver. They would meet with a fresh supply of provisions up the river Plata, if they should be in want of them. Those who were able to wait longer would only put into Chili, or even proceed to the island of Juan Fernandez.

This delightful island, which takes its name from a Spaniard to whom it had been given, and who took a dislike to

it after he had lived there some considerable time, is situated at 110 leagues distance from the continent of Chili. Its greatest length is but about five leagues, and its breadth not quite two. In this small spot, where the land is very mountainous and irregular, there is a clear sky, pure air, excellent water, and every vegetable that is deemed a specific against the scurvy. It has appeared from experience, that all sorts of European and American corn, fruit, and quadrupeds will succeed there extremely well. The coasts abound with fish; and, besides all these advantages, there is also a good harbour, where ships are sheltered from every wind but the north, and even that never blows so strongly as to be productive of any danger.

These conveniencies have induced all the pirates who have infested the coasts of Peru, to put in at Juan Fernandez. Anson, who went to the South seas with more important projects, found there a comfortable and safe asylum. The Spaniards, at length convinced that the precaution they had taken to destroy the cattle they had placed there was insufficient to keep off their enemies, took the resolution, in 1750, to people it. Unfortunately, the new colony was placed on too low a spot, and of the hundred and seventy-one persons of every age and sex who composed it, five-and-thirty were swallowed up, six years after, by the surges of the ocean, which exceeded its bounds. Those who had escaped the waves, were fixed upon an eminence which commands the harbour; and for their security, a small fortification has been raised, defended by a garrison of sixty-six men. It now became necessary to think of supplying their wants. All the ships employed in trading between Peru and Chili were at first obliged to stop at Juan Fernandez. This tyrannical compulsion could not be lasting; and the government at length resolved, purposely, to send two ships there every year.

This post will become a useful settlement, if the court of Madrid will but attend to her own interest. It is needless to pursue this subject any further. The plan, which we have done nothing more than suggest, would evidently tend to promote the trade, the navigation, and the greatness of Spain. The connections that Russia keeps up with China by land, can never acquire the same degree of importance.

BETWEEN these two empires, the greatness of which astonishes the imagination, there is an immense space, known in the earliest times by the name of Scythia, and since by that of Tartary. This region, taken in its full extent, is bounded on the west by the Caspian sea and Persia; on the south, by Persia, Indostan, and the kingdoms of Aracan and Ava, China, and Corea; on the east, by the Eastern ocean; and on the north, by the Frozen ocean. One part of these vast deserts is subject to the Chinese empire; another is under the dominion of Russia; the third is independent, and is called Kharism, and Greater and Less Bucharia.

The inhabitants of these celebrated regions have always lived by hunting and fishing, and upon the milk of their flocks; and have ever had an equal aversion for living in cities, for a sedentary life, and for the toils of agriculture. Their origin and their customs, so far as we are acquainted with them, are equally ancient, for the former could never be traced, on account of their sequestered and wandering way of life. They have lived in the same manner that their forefathers did; and, if we look back to the remotest antiquity, we shall find a very striking resemblance between the men of the earliest ages, and the Tartars of the present time.

These people have in general been followers of the great Lama, who resides at Putali, a town situated in a district, which partly belongs to Tartary, and partly to India. This extensive region, where mountains rise above one another, is called Boutan by the inhabitants of Indostan, Tangut by the Tartars, Tfanli by the Chinese, Lassa by the Indians beyond the Gauges, and Thibet by the Europeans.

Their religion appears, from monuments of undoubted authority, to be of above three thousand years standing, and is founded on the existence of a Supreme Being, and the sublimest principles of morality.

It has been generally imagined, that the followers of the Lama believe him to be immortal; that, in order to maintain the deception, this divinity never appears but to a few favourites; that, when he receives the adoration of the people, it is always in a kind of tabernacle, where a dim light shews rather a faint representation than an exact resemblance of that living god; that, when he dies, another priest is substituted in his stead, as nearly of the same size and figure as

possible; and that, by means of these precautions, the delusion is kept up, even on the very spot where the farce is acted; and much more, without doubt, in the minds of believers, who are further removed from it.

A sagacious philosopher has lately destroyed this prejudice. It is true, the great Lamas seldom shew themselves, the better to maintain that veneration they have inspired for their person and their mysteries; but they give audience to ambassadors, and admit princes who come to visit them. But if their person be seldom to be seen, except on some important occasions, or on great festivals, their picture is always in full view, being hung up over the doors of the temple at Putali.

The circumstance that has given rise to the fable of the immortality of the Lamas, is, that it is a tenet of their faith, that the holy spirit, which has animated one of these pontiffs, immediately upon his death passes into the body of him who is duely elected to succeed him. This transmigration of the divine spirit is perfectly consonant to the doctrine of the metempsychosis, which has always been the established system in those parts.

The religion of Lama made considerable progress in early times. It was adopted in a large part of the globe. It is professed all over Thibet and Mongalia; is almost universal in Greater and Less Bucharia, and several provinces of Tartary; and has some followers in the kingdom of Cassimere in India, and in China.

This is the only form of worship that can boast of such remote antiquity, without any mixture of other systems. The religion of the Chinese has been frequently adulterated by the introduction of foreign deities and superstitions, which have been adapted to the taste of the lower class of people. The Jews have seen an end of their hierarchy, and their temple has been demolished. Alexander and Mohammed used their utmost endeavours to extinguish the sacred fire of the Gaurs. Tamerlane and the moguls have in a great measure diminished the worshippers of the god Brama in India. But neither time, fortune, nor men, have ever been able to shake the divine power of the great Lama.

This is an effect to be reserved to the improvement of the human mind. If the Tartars be enlightened, they will

soon examine into the nature of their creed; they will dispute, and take up arms against each other: but superstition will arise half extinct out of the streams of blood which she has shed. In order not to lose all his influence, the priest will give up those points of his system which are evidently incompatible with common sense; and he will defend the rest against the attacks of infidels. This revolution will however be more slowly brought about, than in those empires which have not a well-regulated ecclesiastical hierarchy, and where there is not a supreme head, whose office it is to support the doctrines in their primitive state. The Lamas themselves confess that they are no gods; but they pretend to represent the divinity, and to have received a power from heaven to decide ultimately on whatever relates to public worship. Their theocracy extends as fully to temporal as to spiritual matters; but all civil matters, looked upon as profane by them, they consider as inconsistent with their dignity, and therefore commit the care of government to persons whom they judge to be worthy of their confidence. This circumstance has successively occasioned the loss of several provinces of their vast dominions, which have fallen a prey to their governors. The great Lama, who formerly was absolute master of all Thibet, now possesses but a small part of it.

The religious opinions of the Tartars have never enervated their valour. Hardened by the frosts of the North, and by the fatigues of a wandering life; incessantly under arms, and perpetually engaged in battles, these people have never ceased being warlike. An ardent, wild, and restless disposition, has always disgusted them of their poor and uncultivated deserts. Ambition has always attracted their avidity towards the countries of Asia, celebrated for their opulence. People whom the arts and a soft climate have rendered effeminate, could not support the attacks of these hardy and ferocious men. The habit of going to war without pay and without magazines, has carried their passion for plunder to the most inordinate excess: and as they were incapable of securing their conquests by equitable laws and a strict policy, they have founded their power in all parts on terror and destruction.

It was to check the inroads of these robbers into China, that, three hundred years before the christian era, that

famous wall was built, which extends from the river Ho-ambo to the sea of Kamtschatka; which has a terrace running all along the top of it, and is flanked in different parts with large towers, after the ancient manner of fortifying. Such a monument shews that there must have been at that time a prodigious population in the empire: but at the same time it seems to indicate that there was a want of prowess and military skill. If the Chinese had been men of courage, they would themselves have attacked the roving tribes, or kept them in awe by well-disciplined armies; if they had been skilled in the art of war, they would have known that lines five hundred leagues in length, could not be defended in every part, and that, if they were broken but in one place, all the rest of the fortification would become useless.

Accordingly, the inroads of the Tartars continued till the thirteenth century. At that period, the empire was conquered by those barbarians, under the command of Gengis Khan. This foreign power was not destroyed till after eighty-nine years, when it fell into the hands of an indolent prince, who was governed by women, and was a slave to his ministers.

When the Tartars were expelled from the conquests they had made, they did not adopt the laws and government of China. When they repassed the great wall, they relapsed into barbarism, and lived in their deserts in as uncivilized a state as they had done before. They united, however, with the few who had continued in their roving way of life, and formed several hordes, which insensibly became populous, and in process of time incorporated into that of the Manchews. Their union inspired them again with the project of invading China, which was torn with domestic dissensions.

The discontented parties were then so numerous, that they had no less than eight different armies, under the command of as many chiefs. In this confusion the Tartars, who had long ravaged the northern provinces of the empire, seized upon the capital in 1644, and soon after upon the whole kingdom.

This invasion did not seem so much to subdue China, as to add to its extent, by the accession of a great part of Tartary. Soon after this, China was further enlarged by the submission of the Mogul Tartars, celebrated for having

founded most of the thrones in Asia, and particularly that of Indostan.

This extraordinary revolution was scarce completed, when the empire was threatened with a new enemy, that might prove a formidable one.

THE Russians, who, towards the latter end of the sixteenth century, had conquered the uncultivated plains of Siberia, had penetrated through a number of deserts to the river Amour, which led them to the Eastern sea, and as far as Selenga, which brought them on the confines of China, a country highly extolled for its riches.

Contentions of the Russians and Chinese in Tartary.

The Chinese were apprehensive that the incursions of the Russians might in time give them some disturbance; and they erected some forts to restrain this neighbouring power, whose ambition began to excite their jealousy. Sharp contests then arose between the two nations concerning their boundaries. Skirmishes were frequent between the parties engaged in the pursuits of the chase, and an open war was daily expected. Very fortunately the plenipotentiaries of the two courts found means to bring about a reconciliation in 1689; the limits were fixed at the river Kerbechi, near the place of negociation, three hundred leagues from the great wall. This was the first treaty the Chinese had ever been concerned in since the foundation of their empire, and it brought on a new arrangement. They granted the Russians the liberty of sending a caravan every year to Peking, an indulgence which had always been denied to foreigners with the utmost precaution. It was easily perceived that the Tartars, though they conformed to the manners and government of the Chinese, did not adopt their political maxims.

THIS liberty granted to the Russians did not inspire them with moderation. They persisted in their usurpations, and built, thirty leagues beyond the stipulated limits, a city, which they called Albassinskoi or Jasca.

The Russians obtain leave to send a caravan to China.

The Chinese, having in vain complained of this encroachment, at last determined to avenge themselves in 1715. As

the czar was engaged in a war on the Baltic, and could not spare troops to defend the extremities of Tartary, the place was taken after a siege of three years.

The court of Petersburg was prudent enough not to give way to a fruitless resentment. They sent a minister to Pekin in 1719, with instructions to renew the trade that had been lost amidst the late disturbances. The negotiation succeeded; but the caravan of 1721 not being conducted with more caution than the former, it was agreed, that for the future no transactions should be carried on between the two nations except upon the frontiers.

Before this new arrangement, a caravan went every year from Petersburg, traversed immense deserts, and was met on the frontiers of China by some hundreds of soldiers, who escorted it to the capital of the empire. There, all who belonged to it were shut up in a caravanserai, to wait till the merchants should offer them the refuse of their warehouses. The traffic being thus completed, the caravan returned to Russia, and arrived at Petersburg three years after it had set out from thence.

In the ordinary course of things, the indifferent merchandize brought by the caravan would have been of very little value; but as this trade was carried on for the court, and that the goods were always sold under the immediate inspection of the sovereign, commodities of the worst kind acquired a value. The admission to this kind of fair was a privilege which the monarch seldom granted but to his favourites. All were desirous of approving themselves worthy of this distinction, and the way to succeed was by overbidding each other without discretion, as each was ambitious that his name should appear upon the list of the buyers. Notwithstanding this shameful emulation, what was put up to sale was so trifling, that the produce, deducting the consumption of the court, never amounted to 100,000 crowns [12,500*l.*]

Since the caravans have been discontinued, two large magazines have been established at Kiatcha, one Russian, and the other Chinese, where all the articles, intended for exchange, are deposited. Commissaries appointed by the two nations superintend this trade, in which specie is very seldom used. If the Russians, who never give any, are obliged sometimes to receive gold, they are compelled to cede it

to the crown, upon terms which indemnify it for the taxes it would have levied on the merchandize.

The most considerable of the articles which the Chinese bring to this staple, is green tea, of an infinitely superior quality to that which Europe receives across the immense tract of sea. Accordingly, the Russians are obliged to pay for it as much as twenty livres [16s. 8d.] per pound; although they seldom sell it again for more than fifteen or sixteen [from 12s. 6d. to 13s. 4d.] To indemnify them for this loss, they never fail to raise the price of their furs: but this artifice turns out less to their advantage than to that of the government, which receives a tax of five-and-twenty per cent. upon every thing that is bought or sold. The customs at Kiatcha sometimes return to the state as far as two millions of livres [83,333l. 6s. 8d.]; in that case, the trade of Russia with China must amount to six millions [250,000l.]

It was not so considerable when Peter I. endeavoured to establish through independent Tartary a communication between Siberia and India.

That great prince, whose mind was always engaged in some useful project, was desirous of opening that communication by means of the Sirth, which waters the Turkestan; and, in 1719, he sent 2,500 men, in order to make himself master of that river.

There was no such river to be found; its waters had been turned off, and conveyed through several channels to the lake Arall. This had been done by the Usbeck Tartars, who had taken umbrage at the repeated observations they had seen making. So singular an incident, therefore, determined the Russians to return to Astracan. The government had lost sight of this object, when, towards the year 1738, the inhabitants of the two Bucharias, known by the name of Bucharis, were themselves desirous of trading with Russia. To encourage this unexpected event, the treasury gave up part of the enormous duties it generally requires. Orenbourg became the seat of this new trade. The Tartars bring there, from their own territories, those beautiful fleeces of lambs that are cut out of their dams' bellies, in order that their skins may be clouded, white, and fine. They also bring various kinds of merchandize which they have drawn from Indostan, and especially a quantity of rough

diamonds. They likewise bring about four hundred quintals of excellent rhubarb. Each quintal costs 500 livres [20l. 16s. 8d.] and the college of trade sells it for nearly double that sum.

We cannot form so advantageous an idea of the connections of Russia with the Indies by the Caspian sea. This was, however, in the remotest ages, the track by which Europe and Asia communicated with each other. The regions bordering upon that immense lake, which are at present very much depopulated, extremely poor, and in a savage state, afford to intelligent minds undoubted proofs of former splendour. Coins of the ancient kaliphs are daily discovered there. These monuments, with others equally authentic, would seem to favour the account of some Indians having been shipwrecked on the coasts of the Elbe in the reign of Augustus, which has always been considered as fabulous, notwithstanding the concurrent testimony of contemporary writers who related the fact. It has never been understood how any inhabitants of India could sail on the Germanic seas; but was it more wonderful to see an Indian trading in the northern countries, than to see a Roman make his way into India through Arabia? The Indians went into Persia, where they embarked on the Hircanian sea, sailed up the Wolga, penetrated into Permian by the Kama, and from thence might embark on the Northern sea or on the Baltic.

Enterprising men have appeared, and will for ever appear, in all ages. Man has within himself a natural energy that torments him; and which is directed by taste, caprice, or fastidiousness, to the most singular attempts. He is curious, and desirous of seeing, and of being informed. The thirst of knowledge is less universal, but it is more irresistible than that of gold. Man travels to a great distance in order to acquire something to speak of, and to make himself be spoken of in his own country. What the desire of fame produces in one, the impatience of misery occasions in another. It is imagined that fortune is more easily acquired in distant regions, than near our own home. Men go a great way to obtain, without fatigue, what they could not otherwise get without assiduous labour. They travel through laziness, or in search of fools and dupes. There are some wretched beings who flatter themselves they shall escape their destiny by

running away from it. There are some intrepid men who court danger; others, without either strength of mind or virtue, cannot support a poverty which lowers them in society beneath their station or their birth. Ruin suddenly brought on, either by gaming, by dissipation, or by ill-concerted schemes, reduces others to a state of indigence to which they are strangers, and which they go to conceal at the poles, or under the equator. To these causes may be added others that are productive of constant emigrations: such as, the oppressions of bad governments, want of religious toleration, and the frequency of disgraceful punishments, which drive the guilty man from a country where he would be obliged to walk with his eyes turned to the ground, to another where he may boldly pass for a man of probity, and look his equals in the face.

No sooner had the English discovered Archangel, about the middle of the sixteenth century, and settled a commerce with Russia, than they formed the project of opening a way into Persia by the Wolga and the Caspian sea, which would be much easier and shorter than that of the Portuguese, who were obliged to sail round Africa and part of Asia, to get into the gulf of Persia. A further inducement to attempt this, was, that the northern parts of Persia, bordering upon the Caspian sea, produce much richer commodities than the southern. The silks of Chirvan, Mazanderan, and more especially Gilan, are the best in all the East, and might be employed with advantage in any manufactures. But the trade of the English was not yet sufficiently confirmed, to encounter the difficulties that must attend so vast and so complicated an undertaking.

Some years after, a duke of Holstein, who had established some silk manufactures in his dominions, was not deterred by these difficulties. He wanted to get the raw silk from Persia, and sent ambassadors thither, of whom there never has been any other account but that of their voyage.

When the French were convinced of the influence of trade on the political balance of Europe, they also wished to procure Persian silks by the way of Russia; but their fatal passion for conquest made them forget this project, as well as many others that have been suggested by men of understanding, for the prosperity of that great nation.

Peter I, guided by his own genius, his own experience,

and the informations of foreigners, could not but be sensible at last, that his subjects were the people who ought to enrich themselves by the productions of Persia, and in process of time by those of India. Accordingly, in 1722, at the beginning of the commotions that have overturned the empire of the sophis, that great prince seized upon the fertile regions bordering on the Caspian sea. The heat of the climate, the dampness of the soil, and the malignancy of the air, destroyed the troops that were left to defend those conquests. Russia, however, did not resolve to relinquish the provinces she had usurped, till she found, in the year 1736, that Kouli Khan, who had conquered the Turks, could compel her to restore them.

The court of Petersburg laid aside all thoughts of carrying on any commerce with that part of the world, when an Englishman of the name of Elton laid a scheme, in 1741, for putting his country in possession of it. This enterprising man was in the service of Russia; his proposal was, to convey the English woollen cloths, by way of the Wolga and the Caspian sea, to Persia, to the north of Indostan, and to the greatest part of Tartary. In consequence of this traffic, he was to receive in exchange, gold, and such commodities as the Armenians sold at an extravagant price, being masters of all the inland trade of Asia. This project was warmly adopted by the English company in Muscovy, and favoured by the Russian ministry.

But the English adventurer had scarce begun to put it in execution, when Kouli Khan, who wanted bold and active men to second his ambition, found means to entice him into his service, and by his assistance to make himself master of the Caspian sea. The court of Petersburg, exasperated at this treachery, revoked, in 1746, all the privileges they had granted; but this was an ineffectual remedy for so great an evil. The untimely death of the Persian tyrant was much more likely to bring matters into their former state.

That great revolution, which once more plunged the sophy's dominions into a more complete anarchy than ever, restored to the Russians the dominion over the Caspian sea. This was a necessary prelude to the opening of a trade with Persia and India, but was not alone sufficient to insure its success; which met with almost insuperable obstacles from

country ; of several happy and intelligent natives, whose chains have been gradually broken, and who profess the arts and commerce in the cities ; of a small number of cultivators, who have entirely at their own disposal the poor inheritance that has been transmitted to them from their ancestors. The property of these farmers becomes, by degrees, the prey of some rich man, who, by making them some interested advances, has indulged them in their laziness, or in their profusion.

Lastly, the lowest class of the state, if we may give them that name, are the slaves. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were few of them, and these all prisoners of war. The lords were then in possession of fiefs, and the people cultivated lands that belonged to them. A new arrangement took place after the conquest of Cazan and Astracan. These beautiful and fertile provinces were so powerful an attraction to the Russian peasants, that in order to put a stop to the emigration, which was becoming general, the rigorous law which confined them all to their own glebe was published in 1556. At this fatal period they lost their property as well as their personal liberty. Their oppression has since been increased, and the human species has been more and more degraded.

This is undoubtedly the cause that has retarded or annihilated the population throughout the whole empire. In 1755, it did not contain more than eight million nine hundred and sixty-five thousand three hundred and sixteen males. Supposing the number of women equal to that of men, the whole amounted to seventeen million nine hundred and thirty thousand six hundred and thirty-two souls. To this number were added the twelve hundred thousand inhabitants of the provinces taken from Sweden in the beginning of the century ; and it was then found that Russia had under its dominion nineteen million one hundred and thirty thousand six hundred and thirty-two subjects, exclusive of the clergy, the nobility and the army. If the wars with Prussia, Poland, and Turkey, epidemical diseases, and rebellions, have since occasioned an evident diminution of the former population ; the great acquisitions recently made in Lithuania, must have filled the deficiency caused by these dreadful scourges.

In states, where the population is not numerous, the

public revenue cannot be considerable. It was scarce any thing in money, when Peter I ascended the throne. This prince raised it to thirty-five millions [1,458,333l. 6s. 8d.] Anne brought it up to sixty [2,500,000l.] and Elizabeth to one hundred and twenty millions [5,000,000l.] It was carried still higher during the war with the Turks, but was reduced, at the peace, to the standard it was at when the troubles commenced. At this period, the treasury owed rather considerable sums to the Genoese and Hollanders, which have since been paid off. It owed to the nation near two hundred millions [8,333,333l. 6s. 8d.] in bank bills, for which it had mortgaged a quantity of copper distributed in the different coffers of the empire.

It is an opinion generally received, that the people are groaning under the weight of their taxes. Even after the burden has been much alleviated, it must still be more lightened, if the arts do not multiply, and especially if agriculture be not remarkably improved.

It would be in vain to encourage it in the northern provinces; nothing can thrive in those frozen deserts. The scattered inhabitants of this inhospitable climate will never be supplied with any kind of food and raiment, except what they can procure from birds, fish, and wild beasts; nor will they ever have any thing beside these to pay their taxes with.

Further from the north, nature begins to wear a milder aspect, and the country is more populous, and more capable of vegetation. In most of the provinces, the labourer is in want of nothing but more perfect utensils, better methods and more extensive means for cultivation. The progress of knowledge gives reason to think that these deficiencies will be remedied. Particular attention will be paid to the Ukraine, which is, perhaps, the most fruitful country in the known world. It supplies Russia with most of her home consumption and articles of trade; and yet she does not receive the twentieth part of what it might be made to produce. The government will succeed the more readily in encouraging rural labours, as the Russians have an aversion for residing in towns, and that they have iron at their disposal, which is the great and inestimable *primum mobile* of agriculture. Nature has furnished it in plenty to most of the countries of the empire, and has given it to Siberia in as perfect a state as even to Sweden.

Beside these iron mines, there are also others which contain those precious metals that have excited the cupidity of all nations, and in all ages. The silver mines near Argun have long been known; and others, both of silver and gold, have lately been discovered in the country of the Baikirs. It would be prudent in some nations to condemn these sources of wealth to oblivion; but this is not the case with Russia, where all the inland provinces are so poor, that they are scarcely acquainted with those signs that have been universally agreed upon to represent every article of commerce.

General trade of Russia. The trade which the Russians have opened with China, Persia, Turkey, and Poland, consists principally in furs, such as ermine, sables, white wolves, and black foxes skins, which all come from Siberia. Although the caprice of the consumers has raised the value of these precious furs beyond what could have been expected, yet their price is still increasing. These commercial connections should be extended to other objects.

The exchanges of the empire with the states of the grand signior, were reckoned nothing, or very inconsiderable. They will soon become of consequence, if the Russians know how to avail themselves of the right acquired by the last treaties, of passing from the Black sea to the Mediterranean, and from the Mediterranean to the Black sea. This privilege, which no other nation had yet obtained, and which none has acquired since, must give to the trade and navigation of the Russians a degree of extension, the boundaries of which it would be presumptuous to fix.

But the greatest demand for the produce of the country will always be on the coasts of the Baltic; since it is a fact, that the merchandize which constantly goes from the single port of Petersburg, exceeds by a ninth part the quantity that is sent from the other two-and-forty customs of the empire. In 1773, the exports of Russia, including the duty of five-and-twenty per cent. claimed by the sovereign, amounted to 106,401,735 livres [4,433,406l. 2s. 6d.] the imports, including the same duty, did not exceed 66,544,005 [2,772,666l. 17s. 6d.] Consequently the apparent balance

was 39,557,830 livres [1,648,242l. 18s. 4d.] We have said the apparent balance; for it is well known, by all persons who are conversant in these matters, that the articles which come into the country, being generally of a smaller bulk than those which go out of it, must necessarily furnish more frequent opportunities of smuggling.

No country is so happily situated as Russia is for extending its commerce. Almost all its rivers are navigable. Peter the Great improved this natural advantage by the assistance of art, and ordered canals to be cut to join those rivers together. The most important of them are finished; others are not quite completed, and some are only planned. Such is the grand project of joining the Caspian sea to the Euxine, by digging a canal from the Tanias to the Wolga.

Unfortunately, these means, which render the circulation of all commodities so easy throughout the whole empire, and which open so ready a communication with all parts of the globe, are rendered useless by a multiplicity of obstacles. The government has taken off part of the restraints which had arisen from defective institutions. Those which are owing to the manners will not so easily be got the better of.

Peter I decreed that the vassals who were possessed of 2500 livres [104l. 3s. 4d.] should have the right of being free, upon condition that they and their descendants should pay annually to the heirs of their former master, what he exacted from them before their freedom. These new citizens, without either education or principles, mostly became merchants; they brought with them into their recent situation the vices they had contracted in servitude, and transmitted them to their posterity. The present generation still partakes of its origin.

The laws do not allow the foreign merchants to buy up the productions of the empire, in any other place except in the ports; and by the nature of the government, the natives have not, or cannot appear to have, capitals considerable enough to form large magazines. Traders are therefore under a necessity of employing some Russian agent to make the purchases. This man, at the time of his undertaking the business, always requires half of the stipulated price; and the rest is to be paid on the delivery.

of the goods. These are seldom so good as they should be; and yet the purchaser does not often refuse them, either because he has some orders to fulfil, or because he is apprehensive, not without reason, that he shall lose all the money he has advanced.

If the foreigner should have any thing to sell, he cannot find purchasers unless he will allow them a credit of a year, or a year and a half. At the time of payment, they usually ask for a fresh indulgence. If it be refused them, they are condemned to an interest of eighteen per cent. The more the debt increases, the more distant is the will or the possibility of satisfying it. Even the atrociousness of the regulations contrived to prevent or to punish bankruptcies, is favourable to the insolvent or fraudulent debtor. It seldom happens that the mercy of the judges, or the corruption of the courtiers, does not screen them from the punishments decreed against them by law. Powerful protections, if they should be necessary, will gratify the vengeance of the deluded creditor; but after he has obtained these decrees, purchased at a very high price, he will only be more certainly disappointed in the expectation of recovering any thing that was due to him.

These dishonest acts and depredations have not prevented the trade of the empire from making a tolerable progress. This would have been more rapid, and more considerable, if the physical and natural advantages had not been obstinately opposed by political or moral causes; if a ministry, seduced or corrupted, had not put a stop to competition, by favouring England to the prejudice of other nations. A better arrangement in this interesting part of administration would contribute much to the public felicity. Let us see what influence the army could have upon it.

*Military Strength
of Russia.*

WHEN Peter I ascended the throne, the military in Russia consisted only of 40,000 strelits, undisciplined and ferocious men, who had no courage but against the people whom they oppressed, and against the sovereign, whom they deposed or murdered at pleasure. This great prince disbanded those seditious troops, and established an army, modelled after those of the other states in Europe.

Since the death of this reformer of the empire, the troops

have been still more improved, and especially increased. They have been gradually raised to three hundred and seventy-five thousand four hundred and fifty-seven men.

Notwithstanding the bravery, number, and discipline of its troops, Russia is, of all the powers, that which ought to be the most cautious of exposing the lives of its subjects. The desire of increasing a territory already too extensive, should never tempt the Russians far from their own frontiers, or induce them to begin hostilities. Russia will never form a close and compact state, or become an enlightened and flourishing nation, unless it should renounce the rage of conquest, to apply solely to the arts of peace. None of its neighbours can compel it to depart from this salutary system.

On the north side, the empire is better guarded by the Frozen sea, than it would be by squadrons and fortresses.

To the east, a single battalion and two field pieces would disperse all the hordes of Tartars that should attempt to molest it.

Should Persia ever again become powerful enough to make any attempts against this empire, they would be rendered ineffectual by the Caspian sea, and by those immense deserts which separate that country from Russia.

To the south, seditions, ignorance, want of discipline, and every kind of corruption that disgraces a nation, had for a century past shaken the Ottoman empire. The Russians have fallen unawares upon the Turks, in this state of degradation, and have contributed to enfeeble them still more. They have broken the ties which attached the Tartars to this dominion; and by procuring the cession of some forts and harbours in the Crimea, have secured to themselves the power of regulating, as their policy requires, the movements of this indefatigable, destructive, and ferocious, body of horse.

To the west, the Russians have nothing to fear from the Poles, who never had any fortified towns, nor troops, nor revenue, nor government, and who have lately been deprived of half their territory.

In the beginning of this century, Sweden lost those of her conquests from which she derived strength and riches. Whatever degree of energy she may acquire from her new constitution, she will never become a formidable power. Far

from being in a condition to aggrandize herself at the expence of the Russians, she will, on the contrary, always have reason to fear, that she shall be deprived by them of what still remains to her in Finland.

It may possibly happen, that the fault which the court of Petersburg as committed, in approximating the Prussian territory to their possessions, may one day occasion hostilities. Some favourable circumstances may perhaps determine this new neighbour to make good the claims of the Teutonic knights upon Livonia ; and then the blood of the Russians and Prussians would stain the waters of the Baltic, and would be confounded under the walls of Riga. The ambition of the house of Brandenburg will, however, be too habitually opposed on the side of Germany, to prevent that power from raising any considerable alarms in the north.

We learn, from these observations, that the empire might diminish considerably its land forces, if they were destined only to guard its provinces from invasion : but as their chief employment is to retain under the yoke people who are always dissatisfied with an oppressive government, it is not an easy matter to determine how far they ought to be reduced. The navy must be considered in another point of view.

The inconsiderable connections of Russia with the rest of Europe were wholly carried on by land, when the English, in seeking a passage to the East-Indies by the northern seas, discovered the port of Archangel. Having sailed up the Dwina, they came to Moscow, and there laid the foundation of a new trade.

Russia had as yet no other communication with her neighbours but by this port, when Peter I invited the traders who frequented the White sea to come to the Baltic, and endeavoured to procure a more extensive and advantageous mart for the productions of his empire. His creative genius soon enlarged his views ; and he was ambitious of making his country become a maritime power.

His first attention was engaged in the construction of vessels fit for the defence of his own coasts, and for attacking those of his neighbours. These are galleys of different dimensions, some of which are fitted for cavalry, but a greater number for infantry. As the troops themselves, who are taught to manage the oar, compose the crews, the galleys

are armed without expence or delay. The anchor is dropped every night, and the forces land where they are least expected.

When the landing is effected, the troops draw the galleys on shore, and form an intrenched camp of them. Part of the army are left to guard them; and the rest are dispersed about the country, upon which contributions are to be levied. When the expedition is at an end, they re-embark, in order to renew the same plunder and devastation on some other spot. A number of experiments have shewn the efficacy of these armaments.

This successful beginning encouraged the reformer of Russia to attempt to have large ships: and it was at Cronstadt, which serves as a harbour to Petersburg, that he stationed his fleets.

The sea is not broad enough before the mouth of the harbour. The ships that are coming in are forcibly driven, by the impetuosity of the Nava, upon the dangerous coasts of Finland. The way to it is through a channel so full of breakers, that they cannot be avoided, unless the weather be remarkably fine. The ships soon rot in the harbour. The sailing of the squadrons is greatly retarded by the ice. There is no getting out but with an easterly wind; and the westerly winds blow in those latitudes the greatest part of the summer. Another inconvenience is, that the dock-yards are at Petersburg, from whence the ships cannot get to Cronstadt, without passing over a very dangerous flat that lies in the middle of the river.

If Peter I had not had that partiality which great men, as well as others, have for their own plans, he might easily have been made sensible that Cronstadt and Petersburg were improper places for the naval forces of Russia, and that it was in vain to expect that art should remove every natural disadvantage. He would have given the preference to Revel, which is much better calculated for this important purpose. Perhaps, more mature reflections would even have convinced him, that it was not yet the proper time for him to aspire to this kind of power.

It is demonstrated both by reason and experience, that a military navy must have for its basis a trading one. Russia, of all the European nations, is that, which the abundance of its naval stores and the bulk and quantity of its produc-

tions, invites to a more active and more extensive commerce. There was not however a single trading vessel in the whole empire, when the plan was adopted of supplying it with a fleet. The founder of an empire, who had been acquainted with the natural progress of things, would have first turned his views towards a commercial navy. This political arrangement was subverted; and the successors of Peter I have never deviated from this erroneous system. None of them have thought of surmounting the obstacles which, arising from a number of defective institutions, have thwarted mercantile expeditions, by which good crews are formed. They have all confined themselves to the system of maintaining and multiplying squadrons, which cannot have either knowledge or experience. At present this navy, the expense of which is useless, is composed upon the Baltic of thirty ships of the line, and twenty-one frigates; in the sea of Azoph, it consists of eleven ships of war, which scarce draw eleven feet of water: and at the mouth of the Danube, of seven or eight large barks, armed with guns of no inconsiderable diameter. It would be proper to disband the greatest part of these forces, till methods had been put in practice to render them useful.

Obstacles which prevent the prosperity of Russia.

THE changes we have taken the liberty to suggest are indispensably necessary to render Russia a flourishing state; but this is not the only thing required. To insure the continuance of her prosperity, some stability must be given to the order of the succession. The crown of Russia was long hereditary; Peter I made it patrimonial; and it became, as it were, elective at the last revolution. But every nation wishes to know upon what right its government is established; and the claim that has the greatest effect upon the people is birth-right. When this evident mark of succession is removed from the eyes of the multitude, universal revolt and dissension prevail.

But it is not enough to give the people a sovereign whom they cannot refuse to acknowledge: that sovereign must make them happy; and this can never be done in Russia, till the form of government be changed.

Slavery, in whatever sense we understand the word, is the state into which the whole nation is fallen. Among the

subjects of the empire, who are considered as free, there is not one of them who is morally certain of the safety of his person, of the permanent property of his fortune, or of liberty, which may not be taken from him, except in cases previously determined by law.

Under such a government, no tie can subsist between the members and their head. If he should be always formidable to them, they are no less so to him. The strength he exerts to oppress them, is no other than their own united strength turned against themselves. Despair, or a nobler sentiment, may every instant turn it against him.

The respect due to the memory of so great a man as Peter I, ought not to prevent us from declaring that his talents did not enable him at one view to discover every requisite necessary to form a well-constituted state. He was naturally a man of genius, and had been inspired with a love of glory. This passion made him active, patient, assiduous, indefatigable, and capable of conquering every difficulty which nature, ignorance, or custom, could oppose, to prevent the success of his enterprises. With these virtues, and the foreign aids he called in, he succeeded in establishing an army, a fleet, and a sea-port. He made several regulations necessary for the prosecution of his great projects; but though he has been generally extolled as a lawgiver, he only enacted two or three laws, and those bear the stamp of a savage disposition. He never proceeded so far as to combine the happiness of his people with his own personal greatness. After his noble institutions, his people were as wretched as ever; and still groaned under poverty, slavery, and oppression. He never relaxed in any one instance his arbitrary power, but rather made it more oppressive; and bequeathed to his successors that detestable and pernicious idea, that the subjects are nothing, and that the sovereign is all.

Since his death, this mischievous system has been constantly pursued. It has been impossible to inculcate the idea that liberty is the birth-right of all men; that every well-regulated society ought to be directed to the general good; and that it is power obtained by unlawful means which has deprived the greatest part of the globe of this natural advantage.

Such has been the opinion of Catherine II. As soon as

this celebrated princess had assumed the reins of government, a report was spread on all sides, that her design was to reign over free men. At the instant when her intentions began to transpire, upwards of a hundred thousand vassals were preparing a revolt against their masters. Many of the lords, who resided upon their estates, were massacred. This commotion, the consequences of which might have subverted the state, made it evident, that it was necessary to tame the bears before their chains were broken ; and that wholesome laws, and a diffusion of knowledge, ought to precede liberty.

Immediately, a system of legislation was planned ; and it was desired that this code should be approved of by the people themselves, in order that they might respect and adhere to it as their own work. “ My children,” said the sovereign to the deputies of her vast dominions, “ consider well “ with me the interests of the nation : let us unite in drawing up a body of laws that may establish public felicity “ upon a permanent basis.”

Catherine attended afterwards to the forming of men ; and was directed in her plan, by a bold and striking truth, addressed to Peter I. That prince was flattering himself with the greatest success, from the return of the young men whom he had sent to acquire knowledge in the most enlightened countries of Europe ; when his buffoon, who was attending to him, folded a piece of paper as hard as he possibly could, and presenting it to him, challenged him to efface the marks of the fold. But if it were impossible to reform Russia in a barbarous state, what hopes can there be of reforming it in a corrupt one ? If it were impossible to give good morals to a people who had none, how can we expect to instil them into the minds of those who are tainted with bad ones ? These considerations have determined Catherine to leave the present generation to itself, and to give her whole attention to posterity.

By her care, schools have been established, in which the nobility of both sexes are instructed in the useful sciences, and in the agreeable arts. Wise men, who have seen these institutions on the spot, have censured the frivolousness and parade that prevails in them : but reflection will sooner or later correct any defects they may have.

Other establishments, perhaps still more necessary, have

been formed in favour of the people. There it is that young men, and young girls, receive, in separate dwellings, during a term of fifteen years, all the kinds of instruction adapted to the employments or professions they are to exercise. When the social virtues have taken deep root in their hearts; when it has been impressed upon them that honour is the most noble recompense of a virtuous mind, and that shame is its most dreadful punishment, these pupils, born in a state of slavery, will no longer have any master, and will become citizens in the utmost extent of the word. The good principles in which they have been educated, will diffuse themselves, in process of time, from the centre of the empire to the most remote provinces; and with the morals which must necessarily result from them, a well-regulated liberty will be extended, which must ensure the felicity of the nation, under the easy restraint of the laws.

To accelerate the progress, always too slow, of a wise legislation, and a good education, it would perhaps be proper to choose out one of the most fertile provinces of the empire, to erect habitations there, to supply them with all the implements of husbandry, and to allot a portion of land to each house. It would then be advisable to invite free men from civilized countries, to give them the entire property of the houses and lands prepared for them, to secure to them a subsistence for three years, and to have them governed by a chief who should have no property in the country. A toleration should be granted to all religions, and consequently private and domestic worship should be allowed, but no public form of worship should be established.

From hence the seeds of liberty would spread all over the empire: the adjacent countries would see the happiness of these colonists, and wish to be as happy as they. Were I to be cast among savages, I would not bid them build huts to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather; they would only laugh at me; but I would build one myself. When the severe season came on, I should enjoy the benefit of my foresight; the savage would see it, and next year he would imitate me. It is the same thing with an enslaved nation; we are not to bid them be free; but we are to lay before their eyes the sweets of liberty, and they will wish for them.

I would by no means impose upon my colonists the bur-

den of the first expences I had incurred on their account ; much less would I entail the pretended debt upon their offspring. This would be false and inhuman policy. Is not a state sufficiently rewarded by a man of twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years of age, who voluntarily devotes his person, his strength, his talents, and his life, to the service of the public ? Must he pay a rent likewise for the present he makes ? When he becomes opulent, he may be considered as a subject, but not till the third or fourth generation, if the project he meant to succeed, and if the people can be brought to that condition, the advantages of which they have had time to be acquainted with.

In this new arrangement, where the interests of the monarch will be blended with those of the subject, in order to strengthen Russia, she must aim less at glory, and sacrifice the influence she has assumed over the general affairs of Europe. Petersburg, which has improperly been made a capital, must be reduced to a mere commercial staple ; and the seat of government transferred to the heart of the empire. It is from such a centre of dominion, that a wise sovereign, acquainted with the wants and resources of his people, will effectually labour to unite the detached parts of that large empire. From the suppression of every kind of slavery will spring up a middle state among the people, without which, neither arts, manners, nor learning, ever existed in any nation.

Till this shall be accomplished, the court of Russia will endeavour in vain to enlighten the nation, by inviting famous men from all countries. Those exotics will perish there, as foreign plants do in our green-houses. In vain will they erect schools and academies at Petersburg ; in vain will they send pupils to Paris and to Rome, to be trained up under the best masters. Those young men, on their return from their travels, will be forced to neglect their talents, and embrace an inferior station to procure a subsistence. In all undertakings, much depends upon the first steps we take ; and the first step is certainly to encourage mechanic arts, and the lower classes of men. If we learn to till the ground, to dress skins, to manufacture our wool, we shall soon see wealthy families spring up. From these will arise children, who, not choosing to follow the laborious professions of their fathers, will begin to think, to

converse, to write, and to imitate nature ; and then we shall have philosophers, orators, poets, painters, and statuary. Their productions will be sought after by rich men, and they will purchase them. As long as men are in want, they will work, and continue their labour till their wants are satisfied. Then they become indolent, and unable to employ their time ; and thus the finer arts are in all places the offspring of genius and indolence, for men fly to them when they have no other resources.

If we attend to the progress of society, we find husbandmen plundered by robbers ; these husbandmen select a few among themselves to oppose the robbers, and thus they commence soldiers. While some are reaping, and the rest are upon guard, some persons looking on say to the labourers and soldiers ; “ you seem to be hard at work ; if you “ that are husbandmen will feed us, and you that are soldiers will defend us, we will beguile your labours with “ our songs and dances.” Hence the origin of the troubadour, or bard, and of the man of science. In process of time, the latter is sometimes joined with the chief against the people, and sings the praises of tyranny ; sometimes with the people against the tyrant, and then he sings the praises of liberty. Whichever part he takes, he becomes a citizen of consequence.

Let us attend to the usual progress of nature, and indeed it would be in vain to depart from it. We shall find all our efforts ineffectual, and every thing tending to decay around us ; we shall be nearly in the same barbarous state from which we endeavoured to extricate ourselves : nor shall we be able to effect this, till circumstances shall give rise to an indigenous policy on our own soil, the progress of which can at most only be accelerated by foreign assistance. This is all we can reasonably expect, and we must continue to cultivate our land.

In this we shall find another advantage, which is, that the arts and sciences of our own growth will gradually advance towards perfection, and we shall be originals ; whereas, if we copy foreign models, we shall be ignorant of the cause of their perfection, and we shall never be any thing more than imperfect imitators.

The picture we have here drawn of Russia may be thought to be an improper digression ; but, perhaps, this is

the time to form a right estimate of a power, which, for some years past, has acted so conspicuous and distinguished a part. Let us now inquire into the connections other European nations have formed with China.

Trade of China with the neighbouring countries.

INDUSTRY prevails among the Chinese more than among any other people in the world. In a country too populous, notwithstanding the plenty of productions, the expectation of approaching dearth makes all the citizens industrious, active, and restless. They must necessarily be interested, mean, false, and deceitful.

This rapacious disposition made the Chinese renounce the use of gold and silver coin in their inland trade. They were forced to this by the great increase of coiners, and are reduced to the necessity of using only copper money.

Copper becoming scarce, though history has not informed us by what means, those shells were afterwards brought into use, so well known by the name of cowries. The government, having observed that the people grew dissatisfied with so brittle a commodity in lieu of coin, ordered that all copper utensils in the empire should be brought to the mint. This ill-judged expedient, proving insufficient to answer the demands of the public, about four hundred temples of the god Fo were ordered to be demolished, and all his idols melted down. After this, the court paid the magistrates and the army, partly in copper, and partly in paper currency. The people were so exasperated at these dangerous innovations, that the government was obliged to drop them. From that time, which was three hundred years ago, copper coin is the only legal money.

Notwithstanding the self-interested disposition of the Chinese, their foreign connections were for a long time inconsiderable. Their distant behaviour with other people proceeded from the contempt they had for them. At length, however, they grew desirous of frequenting the neighbouring ports; and the Tartar government, less solicitous to preserve the ancient manners than the former government had been, encouraged this mode of increasing the wealth of the nation. Voyages were openly undertaken, which before were only tolerated by the interested governors of the maritime provinces. A people so famed for their wisdom

could not fail of meeting with a favourable reception wherever they went. They took advantage of the high opinion other nations entertained of their taste, to recommend the commodities they had to dispose of ; and their activity exerted itself on the continent as well as by sea.

China at present trades with Corea, which is supposed to have been originally peopled with Tartars. It has certainly often been conquered by them, and has been sometimes subject to, sometimes independent of, the Chinese ; to whom it now pays tribute. Here they carry China ware, tea, and silks ; and in return bring home hemp and cotton, and an ordinary sort of ginseng.

The Tartars, who may be considered as foreigners, purchase of the Chinese woollen stuffs, rice, tea, and tobacco, for which they give them sheep, oxen, furs, and especially ginseng. This plant grows upon the confines of Tartary, near the great wall. It is also found in Canada. Its root is a turnip, sometimes single, sometimes divided into two. It has then some resemblance to the inferior parts of a man, from whence it has acquired the name of ginseng in China, and that of garentoguen among the Iroquois.

Its stem, which is renewed every year, leaves, as it falls off, an impression upon the neck of the root, so that the age of the plant is known by the number of these impressions, and its value increases in proportion to its age. This stem, which is low, single, and furnished only with two or three leaves, divided into five smaller ones, terminates in a small umbel of flowers. The flowers are composed of five petals and as many stamina, supported upon a pistil, which being covered with its calix, becomes a small fleshy fruit, filled with two or three little seeds. Some of the flowers produce no fruit.

The virtues of the ginseng root are many ; but it is generally allowed to be a strengthener of the stomach, and a purifier of the blood. Its transparency is given to it by the same process nearly as the orientalists employ for the sallow. This prepared ginseng is in such high estimation among the Chinese, that they never find it too dear.

The government sends out ten thousand Tartar soldiers every year to gather this plant ; and every one is obliged to bring home two ounces of the best ginseng gratis, and for the rest they are paid its weight in silver. Private per-

sons are not allowed to gather it. This odious prohibition does not prevent them. If they did not break this unjust law, they would not be able to pay for the commodities they buy in the empire, and consequently must submit to the want of them.

We have already taken notice of the trade of China with the Russians. It will become considerable, if the two governments should ever discontinue to oppress their merchants.

The trade which the empire has opened with the inhabitants of the Lefs Bucharja, consists only in exchanging its tea, tobacco, and woollen cloth, for the gold dust these people find in their torrents, or in their rivers. These transactions, which are at present inconsiderable, will not receive any great increase, till these barbarians have been instructed in the art of working the mines, with which their mountains abound.

China is separated from the mogul dominions, and from other parts of India, by moving sands, mountains, or by rocks, heaped upon one another, which render every communication with these opulent regions impracticable. Accordingly, they add nothing to the trifling commerce which this nation carries on annually by land. That which the sea opens to them is more considerable.

The empire scarce trusts any thing to the ocean except tea, silks, and china. At Japan these articles are paid for with gold and copper; at the Philippine islands, with piastres; at Batavia, with spices; at Siam, with woods for dying, and with varnish; at Tonquin, with coarse silks; and at Cochin China, with gold and sugar. The returns do not exceed five-and-thirty or forty millions of livres [from 1,458,333l. 6s. 8d. to 1,666,666l. 13s. 4d.] although the Chinese double their capitals in this trade. Their agents or partners in most of the markets they frequent, are the descendents of such of their own countrymen as refused to submit to the yoke of the Tartars.

These connections, which on one side terminate at Japan, and on the other at the straits of Malacca and of Sunda, would probably have been extended, if the Chinese ship-builders had been less attached to their old customs, and had condescended to receive instruction from the Europeans.

It might readily be imagined, that this contempt of one people for the knowledge of another, was one of the principal characteristics of barbarism, or even, perhaps, of the savage state. It is, however, also the vice of a civilized nation. A foolish pride persuades them that they know every thing; or, that what they are ignorant of is not worth the trouble of learning. The nation makes no improvement in the sciences, and its arts remain in that state of mediocrity from whence they will never emerge, unless by some fortuitous event, which time either may, or may not, bring about. The country and a cloister are then in a similar situation; and this is a very exact representation of China, which is surrounded on all sides by light that cannot penetrate into it; as if there were no mode of expelling ignorance from it, without introducing corruption. In what state would the European nations be, if, infected with vanity, concealed under the mask of some prejudice, they had not reciprocally enlightened each other? The one is indebted to the other for the seeds of liberty; and they are both of them indebted to a third, for having taught them the true principles of commerce. This kind of exchange is of infinitely greater consequence to their happiness than that of their productions.

The trade of the Europeans with China. THE first Europeans, whom their restless dispositions impelled towards the coasts of China, were admitted indiscriminately into all the ports. Their extreme familiarity with the women, their haughtiness with the men, and repeated acts of insult and indiscretion, soon deprived them of that privilege; and now they are only suffered to put in at Canton, the southernmost harbour of these extensive coasts.

Their ships at first went up as far as the walls of this celebrated city, situated at the distance of fifteen leagues from the mouth of the Tigris. By degrees the harbour was choked up, so as to give no more than twelve or thirteen feet of water. Then our ships, which had constantly been increasing in size, were obliged to stop at Hoang-pou, three miles distant from the city. It is a tolerable harbour, formed by two small islands. The French, from some particular circumstances, obtained the liberty, in 1745, of six-

ing their magazines in the port of Wampou, which is healthy and populous; but the rival nations have always been forced to transact their affairs at the other port, which is entirely desert, and particularly unwholesome after the rice has been cut.

During the five or six months that the ships crews are wearying themselves or perishing at Hoang-pou, the agents are making their sales and purchases at Canton. When these foreigners first frequented this great mart, they were allowed all the liberty that was consistent with the maintaining of the laws. They soon grew tired of the circumspection which is requisite under a government so much addicted to ceremony. To punish them for their imprudence, they were prohibited from having any immediate access to the person in whom the public authority was vested, and they were all obliged to live together in one quarter of the city. The magistrate would not allow any other place of residence to any, except such as could procure a creditable person to be security for their good behaviour. These restrictions were still increased in 1760. The court, being informed by the English, of the shameful oppressions of its delegates, sent commissaries from Pekin, who suffered themselves to be bribed by the parties accused. Upon the report made by these corrupt men, all the Europeans were confined in a few houses, where they could only treat with a company that was in possession of an exclusive charter. The power of this monopoly has been since diminished, but the other restraints still continue the same.

These mortifications have not induced us to relinquish the trade to China. We continue to get from thence tea, china, raw silk, manufactured silks, varnish, pepper, rhubarb, and some other articles of less consequence.

Tea which the Europeans purchase at China. THE tea-plant is a shrub which has the appearance of growing wild. It is five or six feet high, and is common at China and in Japan. It delights in craggy places; and is most frequently found upon the slope of hills and along the side of rivers. The Chinese sow whole fields with it; the Japanese are satisfied with planting it round the borders of their grounds. It arrives at its full growth only at the end of seven years. The stem is then cut, in

order to obtain fresh shoots, each of which bears nearly as many leaves as a whole shrub.

Its leaves, which are the only valuable part of the plant, are alternate, oval, pointed, smooth, dentated in their circumference, and of a deep green colour. The youngest are tender and thin. They acquire more firmness and substance with age. At the basis of them, distinct flowers make their appearance, which have a calix with five or six divisions, as many white petals, often united at the bottom, and a great number of stamina placed round a pistil. This is changed into a rounded ligneous shell, with three ridges, and three cells, each filled with one spherical seed, or with several angular seeds.

Beside this tea, known by the name of bohea, we may distinguish two other kinds, very strongly characterised. One is the green tea, the flower of which is composed of nine petals; the other the red tea, which has a large flower with six red petals, and furnished in its centre with a cluster of stamina, united at their base. It is not known whether there are more species of this plant existing. Of the three that have been mentioned, the first is the most common. The bohea tea is cultivated in most provinces of China, but is not equally good everywhere; though care be always taken to place it in a southern aspect and in valleys. The tea that grows in stony ground is far preferable to that which grows in a light soil, but the worst sort is that which is produced in a clayish ground. From hence arise the varieties that have improperly been called distinct species.

The different degree of perfection in tea does not arise merely from the difference of soil; but chiefly from the season in which it is gathered.

The first time of gathering it is about the end of February. The leaves then are small, tender, and delicate; and this is the sort that is called *ficki-tsjaa*, or imperial tea, because it is chiefly reserved for the use of the court and people of rank. The second time of gathering it is at the beginning of April; the leaves are then larger and more spread, but of inferior quality to the first. These yield the *toots-jaa*, or Chinese tea, which the merchants distinguish into three sorts. Lastly, the leaves gathered in the month of June, and which are then arrived at their full growth, yield the

bants-jaa, or coarse tea, which is kept for the common people.

A third method of multiplying the various kinds of tea consists in the different manner of preparing it. The Japanese, according to the account of Kœmpfer, have buildings on purpose, which contain a series of small furnaces, each of them covered with a plate of iron or copper. When this is heated, it is spread over with leaves, which have been previously dipped in hot water, or exposed to its vapour. They are stirred about briskly, till they have acquired a sufficient degree of heat. They are afterwards thrown upon mats, and rubbed between the hands. This process, when repeated two or three times, absorbs all the moisture. At the expiration of two or three months, it is renewed again, especially for the imperial tea, which, as it is to be used in powder, requires a more complete desiccation. This precious kind of tea is kept in China jars; that of an inferior quality in earthen pots, and the coarsest of all in baskets of straw. The preparation of this last, does not require so much care. It is dried at a less expence, in the open air. Besides these teas, there are others that are brought in cakes, in balls, or in little parcels tied round with silk. Extracts are also made from them.

The practice of the Chinese in the cultivation, gathering, and preparation of their tea, is less known: but it does not appear to be very different from that used by the Japanese. It has been said that they added to their tea some vegetable dye. Its green colour has likewise been attributed, but without foundation, to a mixture of copperas, or to the effect of the plate of copper upon which the leaf has been dried.

Tea is the common drink of the Chinese; and was not introduced among them through vain caprice. Almost throughout the empire, the water is unwholesome and nauseous. Of all the methods that were tried to improve it, none succeeded so well as tea. Upon trial it was thought to be endued with other virtues, and was extolled as an excellent dissolvent, a purifier of the blood, a strengthener of the head and stomach, and a promoter of digestion and perspiration.

The high opinion which the Europeans, who first went into China, conceived of its inhabitants, induced them to

adopt the high, though perhaps exaggerated, opinion the Chinese had of tea. They communicated their enthusiasm to us; and this enthusiasm has diffused itself with continual increase through the north of Europe and of America, in countries where the air is thick and loaded with vapours.

Whatever may be the influence of prejudice in general, yet it must be allowed, that tea produces some good effects in those countries where the use of it is universally adopted: but these effects cannot be so great anywhere as in China. We know the Chinese reserve the best tea for themselves, and adulterate that intended for exportation, by mixing with it other leaves, which resemble those of tea in shape, but may not have the same properties: we know too that since the exportation has been so great, they are not so circumspect in the choice of the soil, nor so careful in the preparing of the tea. Our manner of using it may likewise contribute to lessen its virtues.

We drink it too hot and too strong; we always mix it with a great deal of sugar, frequently with perfumes, and sometimes with pernicious liquors. Beside all this, its being conveyed so far by sea is alone sufficient to exhaust most of its salubrious salts.

We shall never be able to determine exactly the virtues of tea, till it has been naturalized in our own climates. We began to despair of success, though the experiments had been only made with seeds, which being of a very oily nature, are apt to grow rancid. At length Mr. Linnæus, the most celebrated botanist in Europe, received this shrub in its growing state, and contrived to preserve it out of a green house even in Sweden. Some plants have been since brought into Great Britain, where they live, flower, and thrive, in the open air. France has also procured some; and they will probably succeed in the southern parts of that kingdom. It will be a very great advantage to us, if we can cultivate a plant, which can never suffer so much by change of soil, as by growing musty in the long voyage it must undergo in being brought from abroad. It is not long since we had as little prospect of attaining to the art of making porcelain.

Origin, nature, and properties of the porcelain. SOME years ago there were in the collection of count Caylus two or three little fragments of a vase, supposed to be Egyptian, which being carefully analysed proved to be unglazed porcelain. If that learned man be not in an error, or have not been misinformed, the making of porcelain was known in the flourishing days of ancient Egypt. But, without some more authentic monuments than the allegation of a single fact, we must not deprive China of this invention, where the art has been known for a longer time than we can trace.

Egypt is supposed by many to have the pre-eminence in point of antiquity, both in regard to its foundation, and to laws, sciences, and arts in general, though perhaps China may have as good a claim to it. Nor can it be certainly determined, whether these two empires are not equally ancient, and have not received all their social institutions from a people inhabiting the vast region that divides them: whether the savage inhabitants of the great mountains in Asia, after wandering about for many ages on the continent that forms the centre of our hemisphere, have not insensibly dispersed themselves towards the coasts of the seas that surround it, and formed themselves into separate nations in China, India, Persia, and Egypt: or, whether the successive floods, which may have happened in that part of the world, may not have inclosed and confined them to those regions full of mountains and deserts. These conjectures are not foreign to the history of commerce, which in future times must greatly tend to illustrate the general history of the human race, of the several settlements they have formed, of their opinions and inventions of every kind.

The art of making porcelain is, if not one of the most wonderful, at least one of the most pleasing that men have ever discovered; it is the neatness of luxury, which is preferable to its magnificence.

Porcelain is an earthen ware of the most perfect kind. It varies in colour, texture, and transparency. Transparency, indeed, is not essential to it, for there is a great deal of very fine porcelain which has not this quality.

It is usually covered with white or coloured varnish. This varnish is merely a layer of melted glass, which must never

be completely transparent. This is styled glazed porcelain, and is properly what we call china; the unglazed is distinguished by the name of porcelain biscuit. This is intrinsically as good as the other, but is neither so neat, so bright, nor so beautiful.

The word earthen-ware is well adapted to porcelain, because, as all other earthen-ware, the substance of it is pure earth, without any alteration from art but the mere division of its parts. No metallic or saline substance whatever must enter into its composition, not even in the glazing, which must be made of substances nearly, if not altogether, as simple.

The best porcelain, and commonly the closest, is that which is made of the simplest materials, such as a vitrifiable stone and a pure and white clay. On this last substance depend the closeness and compactness of porcelain, and indeed of earthen-ware in general.

The connoisseurs divide the china that comes from Asia into six classes; the trouted china, the old white, the Japan, the Chinese, the Chinese Japan, and the Indian. These several appellations rather denote a difference that strikes the eye than a real distinction.

The trouted china, which no doubt is called so from the resemblance it bears to the scales of a trout, seems to be the most ancient, and favours most of the infancy of the art. It has two imperfections. The paste is always very brown, and the surface appears full of cracks. These cracks are not only in the glazing, but in the porcelain itself; and therefore this sort has but a small degree of transparency, does not sound so well, is very brittle, and bears the fire better than any other. To hide these cracks, it is painted with a variety of colours: in this kind of ornament consists its only value. The facility with which count Lauragais has imitated it, has convinced us that it is only an imperfect sort of porcelain.

The old white is certainly very beautiful, whether we consider only the glazing, or examine the biscuit.

This is very valuable porcelain, but very scarce, and but little used. The paste of it seems to be extremely short, and fit only for small vases, figures, and other ornamental china. It is sold in trade for Japan, though it is certainly

that some very fine of the same kind is made in China. It is of two different hues; the one a perfect cream-colour, the other a blueish white, which makes it look more transparent. The glazing seems to be more incorporated into this last. This sort has been attempted at St. Cloud, and some pieces have been produced that looked very beautiful; but those who have narrowly examined them, have said that they were no better than frit or lead, and would not bear a comparison.

The Japan is not so easily distinguished as most people imagine from the finest of the sort made in China. A connoisseur, whom we have consulted, pretends, that in general the glazing of the true Japan is whiter, and has less of the blueish cast, than the porcelain of China; that the ornaments are laid on with less profusion, that the blue is brighter, and the patterns and flowers not so whimsical, and more closely copied from nature. His opinion seems to be confirmed by the testimony of some writers, who tell us, that the Chinese who trade to Japan bring home some pieces of china that make more show than their own, but are not so solid; and that they serve to ornament their apartments, but that they never use them, because they will not bear the fire well. All china glazed with coloured varnish, whether sea-green, blueish, or purple, he believes to be Chinese. All the Japan brought into Europe comes from the Dutch, who are the only Europeans that are suffered to come into that empire. Possibly they may have chosen it out of the porcelains brought there every year by the Chinese, or they may have purchased it at Canton. In either case, the distinction between the porcelain of Japan and that of China would not be founded on fact, but merely on prejudice. From this opinion it is plain, that what is sold here for Japan is very fine china.

There is less doubt about what we call porcelain of China. The glazing has a bluer cast than that of Japan, is more highly coloured, and the patterns are more whimsical. The paste is in general whiter and more compact; the grain finer and closer, and the china thinner. Among the several sorts made in China, there is one that is very ancient; it is painted of a deep blue, a beautiful red, or a green like verdigrise, and is very coarse, very thick, and very heavy. Some of this is trouted, and the grain is often dry and

brown. That which is not trouted has a clear sound, but both want transparency. It is sold for old china, and the finest pieces are supposed to come from Japan. It was originally a better sort of earthen-ware, rather than a true porcelain: time and experience may have improved it. It is grown more transparent, and the colours being more carefully laid on, look brighter. The essential difference between this and other china is, that this is made of a shorter paste, and is very hard and solid. The pieces of this china have always at the bottom the marks of three or four supporters, which were put to prevent its giving way in baking. By this contrivance, the Chinese have succeeded in making very large pieces of porcelain. The china that is not of this sort, and which is called modern china, is of a longer paste and finer grain, higher glazed, whiter, and clearer. It seldom has the marks of the supporters, and its transparency has nothing glassy in it. All that is made with this paste is easily turned, so that it is visible the workman's hand is glided over it, as over a fine smooth clay. There is an infinite variety of this sort of china, both as to form, colouring, workmanship, and price.

A fifth sort is what we call Chinese Japan, because it unites the ornaments of the porcelain, which is thought to come from Japan, with those that are more in the Chinese taste. Among this kind of porcelain, there is some that is ornamented with a very fine blue, with white scrolls. The glazing of this kind is remarkable for being a true white enamel, whereas that of the other sorts is half transparent; for the Chinese glazing is never entirely so.

The colours in general are laid on in the same manner, both on the true china and the imitations of it. The first and most lasting of them is the blue that is extracted from smalt, which is nothing more than the calx of cobalt. This colour is commonly laid on before the pieces are either glazed or baked, so that the glazing that is put on afterwards serves as a dissolvent. All the other colours, and even the blue that enters into the composition on the pallet, are laid on over the glazing, and must first be mixed up and ground with a saline substance or calx of lead, that favours their ingress into the glazing. It is rather a common thing for the Chinese to colour the whole of the glazing; the colour is then laid on neither above nor below it, but is incorpor-

ated into the glazing itself. Some very extraordinary fanciful ornaments are made in this manner. In whatever way the colours are applied, they are commonly extracted from cobalt, gold, iron, mineral earths, and copper. That which is extracted from copper is a very delicate colour, and requires great care in the preparation.

All the sorts of porcelain we have described are made at King-to-chin, an immense town in the province of Kiamfi. This manufacture employs five hundred furnaces and a million of men. It has been attempted to be made at Peking and other places of the empire; but it has not succeeded anywhere, though the same workmen have been employed, and the same materials made use of; so that this branch of industry is entirely given up, except in the neighbourhood of Canton, where the sort of porcelain is made that is known amongst us by the name of India china. The paste of it is long and yielding; but in general the colours, especially the blue, and the red of iron, are far inferior to what comes from Japan and the interior parts of China. All the colours, except the blue, stand up in lumps, and are very badly laid on. This is the only china that has purple, which has given rise to that absurd notion of its being painted in Holland. Most of the cups, plates, and other vessels, which our merchants bring home, are of this manufacture, which is less esteemed in China than our delft is in Europe.

Attempts have been made to introduce this art into Europe. It has succeeded best in Saxony. The porcelain that comes from this country is real porcelain, and probably made with very simple materials, though prepared and mixed with more art than in Asia. This curious preparation, together with the scarcity of the materials, is no doubt the circumstance that makes the Dresden porcelain so dear. As there is but one sort of paste that comes from that manufacture, it has been surmised, and not without some degree of probability, that the Saxons were only in possession of their own secret, and by no means of the art of making china. This suspicion seems to be confirmed, by the great affinity there is between the Saxon and other German porcelain, which seems to be made upon the same principle.

However this be, it is certain no porcelain is higher

glazed, smoother, better shaped, more pleasing to the eye, or more solid and durable. It will resist a fierce fire much longer than many of the sorts made in China. The colours are finely disposed, and executed in a masterly manner; none are so well adapted to the glazing; they are blended with great exactness; they are bright, without being shaded and glazed, like those of most of the porcelain made at Sevre.

The mention of this place reminds us that we must take notice of the porcelain made in France. This, like the English, is only made with frit; that is, with stones that are not fusible in themselves, but receive a beginning of fusion from the mixture of a greater or less quantity of salt; and accordingly it is more glassy, of a looser texture, and more brittle than any other. That of Sevre, which is by far the worst of all, and always looks yellowish and dirty, which betrays the lead they put into the glazing, has no other merit than what it derives from the excellence of the artists that are employed for the patterns and penciling. These great masters have displayed so much taste in the execution of some of the pieces, that they will be the admiration of posterity; but in itself this ware will never be more than an object of taste, luxury, and expence. The supporters will always be a principal cause of its dearness.

All porcelain, when it receives the last effect of the fire, is actually in a state that has a tendency to fusion, is soft and pliable, and might be worked like red-hot iron. There is none of it that will not bend and give way when it is in that state. If the pieces when they are turned, are thicker, or project more on one side than another, the strongest will infallibly bear away the weakest; they will warp to that side, and the piece is spoiled. This inconvenience is prevented by propping it up with bits of porcelain made of the same paste, of different shapes, which are applied under, or to the parts that project, and are most in danger of being warped. As all porcelain shrinks in baking, the props must also be made of such materials as will yield in the same degree exactly as the paste they are intended to support. As the different pastes do not shrink equally, it follows that the props must be made of the same paste as the piece they support.

The softer the china is, and the more inclining to vitri-

fication, the more it requires to be propped up. This is the great fault of the *Sevre china*; the paste is very costly, and frequently more of it is wasted in props, than is employed in making the piece itself. The necessity of this expensive method produces another inconvenience. The glazing cannot be baked at the same time as the porcelain, which therefore must twice undergo the heat of the furnace. The porcelain made in China, and the best imitations of it, being of a stiffer paste, and less susceptible of vitrification, seldom want any props, and are baked ready glazed. They therefore consume much less paste, are seldom spoiled, and require less time, as well as less fire and trouble.

Some writers have urged, in favour of the superiority of Asiatic china, that it resists fire better than ours; that all European china will melt in that of Saxony, but that the Dresden itself will melt in the foreign china. This assertion is entirely erroneous, if taken in its full extent. Few porcelains of China will stand the fire so well as the Dresden; they spoil and bubble in the same degree of fire which serves to bake that made by count Lauragais; but this is a circumstance of so little consequence, that it scarce deserves attention. Porcelain is not intended to return into the furnace when once it is taken out, nor is it designed to bear the action of an intense fire.

It is in point of solidity that the foreign porcelain truly excels that of Europe; it is by the property it has of heating quicker and with less risk, and of bearing, without danger of being broken, the sudden effect of cold or boiling hot water; by the facility with which it is moulded and baked, which is an inestimable advantage, as pieces of all sizes can be made with great ease, as it can be baked without any risk, be sold at a lower price, be of more general use, and consequently become the object of a more extensive trade.

Another great advantage of the India porcelain is, that the same paste is very useful for making crucibles, and a variety of such vessels which are constantly used in the other arts. They not only bear the fire for a longer time, but communicate nothing of their substance to what is fused in them. Their substance is so pure, white, compact, and hard, that it can scarce be melted, and acquires no kind of tinge.

France is at the eve of enjoying all these advantages. It is certain that count Lauragais, who has long been in search of the secret of the Chinese, has at last made some china that is very like it. His materials have the same properties, and if they are not exactly the same, at least they are a species of the same kind. Like the Chinese, he can make his paste long or short, and follow either his own or some other process. His porcelain is not inferior to that of the Chinese in point of pliability, and is superior to it in point of glazing; perhaps too in the facility with which it takes the colours. If it can be improved to such a degree as to have as fine and as white a grain, we may dispense with the porcelain of China.

While the discovery of count Lauragais, from obstacles with which we are unacquainted, was confined to mere experiment, the manufactory of Sevre was gradually leaving off its frit, and substituting to it another kind of paste, made from an extremely white earth, found in the province of Limoges. This new porcelain is much more solid than the former; its appearance is more beautiful, its grain more pleasing to the eye, and its transparency less vitreous. Its glazing is often much finer. This manufacture, by changing its paste, partakes more of the nature of real porcelain, and the process of making it is more simple.

Nevertheless, as the earth made use of at Sevre is very short, and as the argillaceous part, which is the only one that can impart cohesion to it, can make it easy to work, and give it solidity in baking, enters little into the composition of this earth, the pieces that are produced from this manufacture will of course always bear a high price. Count Lauragais's paste would not be subject to this inconvenience; for though it be not so white, yet, under the hand of the artist, it will bend, like wax, at pleasure.

The brilliancy of the Limoges earth has delighted every one. Paris, and its districts, have been immediately filled with porcelain ovens. All these manufactures have got their materials from this province, and they have been found of the same kind; but more or less white, and more or less fusible, according to the part of the very extensive layer from which they have been taken.

When M. Turgot was intendant of Limoges, he established a manufactory of porcelain upon a very well con-

certed plan. If this manufacture, which is upon the spot, and which has the advantage over all the rest of selecting its materials, and in cheapness of workmanship, should be conducted with activity and skill, it must put an end to all competition. That of Sevre alone will still subsist; which, from the elegance of its forms, and the superior taste of its ornaments, will ever be beyond any kind of comparison. But we have said enough, and perhaps too much, upon the subject in question. We must now proceed to speak of the silks of China.

The Europeans buy silks in China. The annals of China ascribe the discovery of silk to one of the wives of the emperor Hoangti. These princesses afterwards amused themselves with breeding up silk-worms, drawing the silk, and working it. It is even said, that in the interior part of the palace there was a piece of ground set apart for the culture of mulberry-trees. The empress, attended by the chief ladies of the court, went in person and gathered the leaves of some of the branches that were brought down so as to be within her reach. So prudent an instance of policy promoted this branch of industry to such a degree, that the Chinese, who before were only clothed in skins, soon appeared dressed in silk. The silks, that were now grown very common, were soon brought to great perfection. The Chinese were indebted for this last advantage to the writings of some ingenious men, and even of some ministers, who had not disdained to attend to this new art. All China learned from their theory every thing belonging to it.

The art of breeding up silk-worms, and of spinning and weaving their silk, extended from China to India and Persia, where it made no very rapid progress; if it had, Rome would not, at the end of the third century, have given a pound of gold for a pound of silk. Greece having adopted this art in the eighth century, silks became a little more known, but did not grow common. They were long considered as an object of magnificence, and reserved for persons in the most eminent stations, and for the greatest solemnities. At length, Roger, king of Sicily, sent for manufacturers from Athens; and the culture of the mulberry-tree soon passed from that island to the neighbouring con-

continent. Other countries in Europe wished to partake of an advantage from which Italy derived so much wealth; and after some fruitless attempts they attained it. However, from the nature of the climate, or some other cause, it has not succeeded equally in every place.

The silks of Naples, Sicily, and Reggio, whether in organzin or in tram, are all ordinary silks; but they are useful, and even necessary for brocades, for embroidery, and for all works that require strong silk.

The other Italian silks, those of Novi, Venice, Tuscany, Milan, Montserrat, Bergamo, and Piedmont, are used in organzin for the warp, though they are not all equally fine and good. The Bologna silks were for a long time preferred to any other. But since those of Piedmont have been improved, they justly claim the preference, as being the smoothest, the finest, and the lightest. Those of Bergamo come nearest to them.

Though the Spanish silks in general are very fine, those of Valencia are by far the best. They are all fit for any sort of manufacture; the only fault they have, is being rather too oily, which is a great detriment to the dye.

The French silks excel most others in Europe, and are inferior to none but those of Piedmont and Bergamo in point of lightness. Besides, they are brighter coloured than those of Piedmont; and more even and stronger than those of Bergamo.

The variety of silk produced in Europe has not yet enabled us to dispense with that of the Chinese. Though in general it is uneven and heavy, it will always be in request for its whiteness. It is generally thought to derive this advantage from nature: but it is more probable, that, when the Chinese draw the silk, they put some ingredient into the bason, that has the property of expelling all heterogeneous substances, or at least the coarsest parts of them. The little waste there is in this silk compared to any other, when it is boiled for dying, seems to give great weight to this conjecture.

However this be, the Chinese silk is so far superior to any other in whiteness, that it is the only one which can be used for blondes and gauzes: all our endeavours to substitute our own in the blonde manufactures have been fruitless, whether we have made use of prepared or unprepared

filk. The attempts in gauze have not been quite so unsuccessful. The whitest French and Italian silks have been tried, and seemed to answer tolerably well; but neither the colour nor the dressing were so perfect as in the gauzes made with the Chinese filk.

In the last century, the Europeans imported very little silk from China. The French silks succeeded very well for black and coloured gauze, and for cat-gut that was then in fashion. The taste that has prevailed for these forty years past, and more especially for the last twenty-five, for white gauzes and blondes, has gradually increased the demand for this production of the east. Of late it has amounted to eighty thousand weight a-year, of which France has always taken near three-fourths. This importation has increased to such a degree, that in 1766 the English alone imported a hundred and four thousand weight: as it could not be all consumed in gauze and blonde, the manufacturers have used it for tabbies and hose. The stockings made of this silk are of a beautiful white that never changes, but are not near so fine as others.

Beside this silk, so remarkable for its whiteness, which comes chiefly from the province of Tche-Kiang, and is known in Europe by the name of Nanking silk, which is the place where most of it is prepared, China produces ordinary silks, which we call Canton. As these are only fit for some kinds of tram, and are as dear as our own, which answer the same purpose, very few are imported. The quantity brought home by the English and Dutch does not exceed five or six thousand pieces. The manufactured silks are a much more considerable article.

The Chinese are not less ingenious in weaving their silks than in preparing them. This does not extend to those that are mixed with gold and silver. Their manufacturers have never known how to draw out these metals into thread, and the whole of their art consists in rolling their silks upon gilt paper, or putting the paper upon them after they are woven. Both methods are equally bad.

Though, in general, men are more apt to be pleased with novelty than with true excellence, yet the Europeans have never been tempted to buy these stuffs. They have been equally disgusted at the awkwardness of the patterns, which exhibit nothing but distorted figures, and unmean-

ing groups; they discover no taste in the disposition of the lights and shades, nor any of that elegance and ease that appear in the works of our good artists. There is a stiffness and a want of freedom, in all that the Chinese do, that is displeasing to persons of any taste; all favours of their particular turn of mind, which is destitute of vivacity and elevation.

The only thing that makes us overlook these defects in those works that represent flowers, birds, or trees, is, that none of those objects are raised. The figures are painted upon the silk itself with indelible colours; and yet the deception is so perfect, that all these objects appear to be brocaded or embroidered.

Their plain silks want no recommendation, for they are perfect in their kind; and so are their colours, especially the green and the red. The white of their damasks has something extremely pleasing. The Chinese make them only with the silk of Tche-Kiang. They thoroughly boil the warp, as we do, but only half-boil the woof. This method gives the damask more substance and stiffness. It has a reddish cast, without being yellow, which is very pleasing, and has not that glare that dazzles the sight. This agreeable white is likewise observed in the Chinese varnish.

THE varnish is a particular kind of *The Europeans* resin, which distils from a tree called at *purchase lacquer-* Japan, *siz-dsiu*, and at China, *si-chu*. It *ed ware and pa-* has few branches, and is of the height of *per in China.* the willow. Its bark is of a whitish colour and rough, its wood brittle and full of pith. Its leaves, which are alternately disposed at the extremity of the branches, resemble those of the ash, and push out from their axillæ clusters of flowers, which are male upon one plant, and female upon another. The first have a calix with five divisions, five petals, and as many stamina. In the others we find, instead of stamina, a pistil crowned with three styles; this pistil becomes a yellowish fruit, of the bigness of a pea, slightly compressed on the sides, and filled with a hard kernel. This tree grows very well from seed, but the method of propagating it by sprigs is preferred. For this purpose, the branches from which new plants are

to be raised, are chosen in autumn. They are surrounded at their base with a ball of moistened earth, tied round with thread, till the season of the frost, and kept moist by being constantly watered. In the spring, when the branch has shot some branches into this earth, it is sawed off below the ball, and transplanted.

This tree grows only in some mild provinces of China and Japan. It is also found in those regions of America that are situated under the same latitude, such as Louisiana and Carolina. It thrives in all soils and with all exposures: but its produce is not the same in every place, either in quality or quantity. It requires but little care in cultivating. It is sufficient to stir up the ground a little at the foot of the trees, and to put dead leaves round it, which serve instead of dung. The trunk of those trees that grow wild in the mountains, is sometimes twelve inches in diameter. It is much less in those trees that are cultivated, and which do not last less than ten years. This difference is to be attributed to the incisions that are made in their bark to extract the varnish. This milky juice, which exists in all parts of the tree, distils from the incisions, under the form of liquid pitch. When exposed to the air it assumes a reddish colour, which is soon changed into a bright black. Shells are fixed at each slit, to receive the liquor; which is afterwards poured into bamboos, and then carried to the merchants, who put it into larger vessels. The fresh varnish exhales a dangerous vapour, which produces inflammatory humours upon the skin of those who are exposed to it. They preserve themselves from this pernicious effect, by turning the head aside when they collect the liquid, or when they pour it off. Some travellers add, that the workmen rub their hands and face with oil before and after the business, and that they carefully cover all other parts of their body.

The varnish is gathered in the summer, and the process is repeated three times in the same season, and upon the same tree; but the first that runs off is the best. When the tree appears exhausted, its stem is cut off, and the root pushes forth fresh shoots, which are ready to yield varnish at the end of three years.

The varnish most in repute is that which comes from Japan. It does not require much preparation. It is suf-

sufficient to strain it through a cloth, in order to separate it from any foreign particles. The superfluous watery parts are also evaporated by the heat of the sun, and hogs gall is added to give it a degree of consistence.

We must not confound this varnish with a very inferior sort with which it is adulterated. The latter, which is known by the name of Siam varnish, distils from the tree that yields the anacardium. It is only used in varnishing the most ordinary utensils. It is gathered at Siam, Cambodia, and Tonquin, where the Chinese purchase it, because that which they extract from the tichu is not sufficient for their consumption.

The true varnish, of which they distinguish three different kinds in China, is used in two ways. The first consists in rubbing the wood with a particular sort of oil used in China; and as soon as it is dry, the varnish is laid on. It is so transparent, that the veins of the wood appear tinged through it, if it be laid on but two or three times. If it be repeatedly applied, it may be brought to shine like a looking glass.

The other way is more complicated. A kind of pasteboard is glued by the help of mastic over the wood. On this smooth and solid ground are spread several layers of varnish. It must be neither too thick nor too liquid; and in this just medium the skill of the artist principally consists.

Whichever way the varnish is laid on, it effectually preserves the wood from decaying. The worms can scarce penetrate it, neither has the damp ever the least effect upon it; and with a little care this varnish leaves no smell behind.

This varnish is as pleasing to the eye as it is durable. It may be applied on gold and silver; and mixed with all sorts of colours. Upon it are painted figures, landscapes, palaces, hunting parties and battles. In short, it would not be deficient in any respect, if it were not generally spoiled by the badness of the Chinese drawing.

Notwithstanding this defect, the making of this ware requires much pains and constant attention.

The varnish must be laid on nine or ten times at least, and cannot be spread too thin. There must be a sufficient time allowed between the application of each layer, that it may be suffered to dry. A longer time still must be allowed between the application of the last layer and the polish-

ing, painting, and gilding. A whole summer is scarce sufficient for all this process at Nanking, from whence the court and the chief cities of the empire are supplied. It is carried on with greater expedition at Canton. As there is a great demand for this ware in Europe, and as the Europeans will have it made according to their own plan, and will allow but a short time to complete it, it is usually finished in too great haste. The artist, not having time to give the necessary degree of perfection to his work, is satisfied if he can but make it pleasing to the eye. The Chinese manufacture of paper is not liable to the same imperfections.

Originally the Chinese wrote with a steel bodkin upon wooden tablets, which, being fastened together, made a volume. They afterwards traced their characters upon pieces of silk or linen, cut to any length or breadth. At last, about sixteen hundred years ago, they found out the secret of making paper.

The Chinese paper is of two kinds. That which is used for writing and printing, is made of cotton rags, and of hemp, by a process nearly similar to that which is practised in the European manufactures. It is equal, and in some respects superior, to our paper. Its thinness and transparency have suggested the idea of its being made of silk. But the persons who have propagated this opinion knew not that silk, though it may be reduced into very minute particles, will not mix with water, and can never acquire a consistence by being laid upon frames.

In making the second kind of paper, the Chinese use the internal barks of the mulberry tree, of the elm, of the cotton tree, and more frequently of the bamboo. These substances, after they are become rotten by soaking in muddy water with lime in it, are cut in pieces, bleached in the dew or in the sun, triturated in mortars, and boiled in coppers to a fluid paste. This paste being spread upon frames that are made of small cane rods passed through the wire-drawing iron, produces those sheets of paper that are sometimes twelve feet long, and four feet broad, and which are generally used for hangings in the Chinese houses. Sometimes they are designed for writing or printing: but they must in that case be dipped in a solution of alum; and even after this process, one can only write or print upon one of the two sides.

Though this paper be apt to crack, to be injured by

damps, and to be worm-eaten, it is become an article of trade. Europe has borrowed from Asia the idea of furnishing closets and making screens with it.

The figures upon this paper are graceful in their attitudes and in their dress: but though we see heads, which present some agreeable feature, yet they are very incorrectly drawn. The eyes in a full face are frequently represented as they should appear in a profile; and the hands are always wretchedly done. Moreover, there are no shades in these drawings, and the objects appear as if they received light from all sides. They have not even a shade upon their ground, and are, in some measure, transparent. Accordingly, it may be said that the Chinese are not in the least in possession of the art of painting: for there can be no painting where there are neither contours, nor half-tints, nor shades, nor reflected lights. Their works are at best nothing more than slight coloured prints.

We cannot draw any conclusion from the plates that were engraved at Paris for the emperor of China. The drawings were made by missionaries who had learned the art of design in Europe, by which means, they have in general been found conformable to the ideas of effect which we acquire from a studied inspection of nature. Nevertheless, in conformity without doubt to the custom of the empire, one of them has been found, in which the figures marked no shade upon the ground, which made them appear as if they were in the air.

The perspective we observe in these drawings may also be attributed to the knowledge acquired in Europe. Though it be not accurate nor well chosen, since all the aspects are represented as in a kite's view, yet these prints are, in this respect, very superior to real Chinese drawings. In the latter, we may indeed distinguish some idea of diminution in perspective, and of the lessening of objects: but we discern nothing that can induce us to suppose, that they have any knowledge of perspective geometrically demonstrated.

These theoretical principles being less necessary in sculpture, they have made more proficiency in that art. In many of their figures with shaking heads, we observe accurate imitations of nature, executed with great care, but without taste in the workmanship, and servilely copied, as

amongst us, at the revival of the arts. These artists know not how to consider nature in her beauties. This proceeds, probably, from their not studying the naked figure, and from the circumstance of their not aiming at improvement, as soon as they find that they are advanced as far as their predecessors.

This confined method of studying may however have produced one good effect among them, with respect to their porcelain. It may have contributed to preserve in their vases the forms the most simple, and those which first presented themselves. These are, in fact, the most proper for this species of sculpture. They are the best adapted to the necessity of bearing an intense fire without getting out of shape. Their form, which is generally upright, or has none but very easy inflections, seems more fit to bear the effect of baking. Our abundance of genius, and the constant desire of producing something new, induces us to attempt all kinds of curved attitudes, and frequently to paint objects in the air, which succeed with difficulty; and which, becoming irregular by the action of the fire, produce many defects, and occasion the loss of several pieces. To which we may add, that the first workmen who were employed in making figures for vases in our manufactures, were too much accustomed to work in gold and silver, where every thing may be attempted. It is to be hoped, that time, experience, and the failure of success in many trials, will restore to this art the simplicity that belongs to it.

Since the custom of painting upon paper has been adopted in France and England, the Chinese paper is in less request. We may possibly be as successful in our endeavours of producing rhubarb for ourselves.

China supplies the Europeans with rhubarb and other articles.

THE rhubarb is a root which has the property of purging gently, of strengthening the stomach, of facilitating digestion, and of destroying worms in children. It is a tuberosc root, rather spongy, brown in the outside, yellow internally, and streaked with reddish veins. Its taste is bitter and astringent, its smell acrid and aromatic. That which is close, has a strong smell, and tinges the saliva yellow, is preferred. The pieces that are rotten, too loose in their texture, and have but little smell, are thrown away.

We have not, as yet, any certain idea of the plant that yields this remedy : it has not been examined upon the spot by any naturalist. The rhubarb of Muscovy, the leaves of which are undulated, has been for some time considered as the true rhubarb : but its root, which is too compact, and less purgative, seems to decide the matter against it. Another species; which is the *rheum palmatum* of the botanists, and some seeds of which Mr. de Jussieu has lately received through Russia, should seem to be the plant in question. Its root has the same texture, the same distinguishing characters, the same properties, as that which is used in our shops. It is oblong, tuberose, and pushes out several leaves, palmated, has sharp pointed pods, from the middle of which there rises, at the height of six feet, a stalk of white flowers, rather small, each of which is composed of a coloured calix with six divisions of nine stamina, and one pistil, surmounted with three styles, which becomes, as it ripens, a triangular seed.

We know not the precise place from whence this species originally comes : but it is well ascertained, that the true rhubarb grows without cultivation, between the thirtieth and thirty-ninth degrees of north latitude. The provinces of Chenfi and of Setscheun, to the north-west of China, the Less Bucharía, and the kingdom of Tangut, fill up a great part of this immense space.

The root of the rhubarb is taken out of the earth towards the end of winter, before the leaves are unfolded. It is cut into pieces, which are placed upon long tables, and stirred about several times in a day, till the juice they contain is grown thick and concrete. Without this precaution, the most active part of the root would be dissipated, the consequences of which would be a diminution of its weight, and of its virtues. The roots are afterwards strung upon little strings to dry them, and are hung up in the open air, in a shady place, or tied round the necks of the cattle, as some travellers affirm. They are afterwards folded up in cotton, and sent to their respective destinations.

The Calmuck Tartars, and the inhabitants of Great Bucharía, are the persons who carry the rhubarb to Oremburg, where the Russian government has it bought up. The good roots are carefully separated from the bad ones. Those that are not worth preserving are burned ; and the

rest are dried a second time. The rhubarb that is not consumed in the interior part of the empire, is delivered to the English merchants at a stipulated price, which never varies. It is the best of all the rhubarbs.

Next to this is the sort which the people of Great Bucharia carry into Persia, and which, after having traversed part of Asia by land, arrives on the borders of the Mediterranean, where it is bought by the Venetians.

Before it is sold again, this rhubarb is treated nearly with the same care as that which has passed through the hands of the Russians.

The rhubarb which comes to us by these two channels, not being sufficient for our consumption, we have been obliged to employ that which our navigators bring us from China. It is very inferior to the other sorts; whether it be that it has only been dried in an oven, as it has been imagined from its not being bored; or whether it may have acquired some particular taste by being placed near other productions; or, in a word, whether a long voyage at sea may not have altered its properties.

The Europeans have been desirous of appropriating to themselves this salutary plant. The rhubarb tree which is seen in the royal garden at Paris, has already furnished some seeds and shoots, which have succeeded in an open ground, in several provinces of the kingdom. The society established at London for the encouragement of arts and commerce, distributed, in 1779, medals to two English cultivators who had produced rhubarb of a superior quality. These first experiments must have been attended with favourable consequences.

Beside the articles already mentioned, the Europeans bring from China, ink, camphire, borax, canes, gum-lac: and formerly they purchased gold there.

In Europe a mark of gold is worth about fourteen marks and a half of silver. If there were a country in which it was worth twenty, our merchants would carry gold thither to exchange it for silver. They would bring us back that silver, to receive gold in exchange, which they would again carry abroad for the same purpose. This trade would be continued in this manner till the relative value of the two metals came to be much the same in both countries. It was upon this principle, that for a long time silver was sent

to China, to be bartered for gold ; by which traffic a profit of forty-five per cent. was made. It was never carried on by the charter companies ; because the profit they made upon it, however considerable it may appear, was yet much inferior to that obtained upon their merchandize. Their agents, who were not indulged in pursuing what trade they chose, attended to these speculations for their own advantage. They followed this branch of commerce with so much assiduity, that in a short time the returns were not sufficient to induce them to continue it. Gold is of greater or less value at Canton, according to the time of the year when it is purchased ; its value is lower from the beginning of February to the end of May than through the rest of the year, when the harbour is full of foreign ships. Yet, in the most favourable season, no more than eighteen per cent. is to be made of it, which is not a sufficient inducement for any one to undertake this traffic. The only agents, who have not been sufferers by the cessation of this trade, are those of the French company, who were never allowed to be concerned in it. The directors reserved that profit for themselves. Many attempted it ; but Castanier was the only one who carried on the trade with abilities and success. He sent goods to Mexico ; these were sold for piastres, which were carried to Acapulco, then to the Philippines, and from thence to China, where they were bartered for gold. That able man, by this judicious circulation, had opened a track, which it is surprising that no one has since pursued.

ALL the European nations, which sail beyond the Cape of Good Hope, go as far as China. The Portuguese were the first who landed there. The Chinese gave them the town of Macao, which was built upon a barren and rugged spot, on the point of a little island at the mouth of the river Canton, and with it a territory of about three miles in circumference. They obtained the freedom of the harbour, which is too narrow, but safe and commodious, upon the condition of paying to the emperor all the duties to be levied on the ships that should come in ; and they purchased the liberty of building fortifications, by engaging to pay a year-

Account of the Europeans who have formed connections with China.

ly tribute of 37,500 livres [1562l. 10s.]. As long as the court of Lisbon maintained the sovereignty of the Indian seas, this place was a famous mart. It declined in the same proportion as the power of the Portuguese, and gradually came to nothing. There would scarce be any remembrance left of this spot, formerly so celebrated, if, during one part of the year, it did not serve as an asylum for the European factors, who, after the departure of their ships, are obliged to quit Canton, which they cannot re-enter till their vessels return. Nevertheless, the feeble remains of this once flourishing colony, still enjoyed a kind of independence till the year 1774.

At that period, the murder of a Chinese determined the viceroy of the province to apply to his court for a magistrate to instruct and govern the barbarians of Macao; these were the words of his petition. The court sent a mandarin, who took possession of the town in the name of his master. He scorned to live among foreigners, who are always holden in great contempt, and fixed his residence at the distance of a league from the town.

The Dutch met with worse treatment about a century ago. Those republicans, who, notwithstanding the superiority they had gained in the Asiatic seas, had been excluded from China by the intrigues of the Portuguese, at last got access to the ports of that empire. Not satisfied with the precarious footing they had acquired there, they attempted to erect a fort near Hoang-pou, under pretence of building a warehouse. It is said, that their design was to make themselves masters of the navigation of the Tigris, and to give law both to the Chinese and to foreigners, who were desirous of trading to Canton. Their views were discovered too soon for their interest. They were all massacred; and it was a great while before any of their nation could venture to appear anew upon the coasts of China. They were seen there again about the year 1730. The first ships that arrived there came from Java. They brought various commodities of the growth of India in general, and of their own colonies in particular, and bartered them for those of the country. The commanders of these vessels, wholly intent upon pleasing the council of Batavia, from which they immediately received their orders, and expected their promotion, had nothing in view but to dispose of the merchan-

dize they were intrusted with, without attending to the quality of that they received in return. The company soon found, that in consequence of this proceeding they could never support themselves against their competitors. This consideration determined them to send ships directly from Europe with money. They touch at Batavia, where they take in such commodities of the country as are fit for China, and return directly into our latitudes, with much better ladings than formerly, but not so good as those of the English.

Of all the nations that have established an intercourse with China, the English have maintained it the most constantly. They had a factory in the island of Chusan, at the time when affairs were chiefly transacted at Emouy. When these were centered at Canton, their activity was still the same. As their company were required to export woollen cloths, they determined to keep agents constantly at this place to dispose of them. This custom of the English, joined to the great demand for tea in their settlements, made them, at the beginning of the century, masters of almost all the trade carried on between China and Europe. The heavy duties laid by the parliament on that foreign production, at last made other nations, and France in particular, sensible of the advantages of this commerce.

France had formed in 1660 a particular company for the trade of these latitudes. A rich merchant of Rouen, named Fernel, was at the head of the undertaking; which was begun with an insufficient capital, and proved unsuccessful. The aversion, naturally entertained for a people who believed that foreigners came among them for no other purpose than to corrupt their morals, and to deprive them of their liberty, was considerably increased by the losses that were sustained. In vain, towards the year 1685, did the Chinese alter their opinion, and consequently their behaviour. The French seldom frequent their ports. The new society formed in 1698, was not more active than the former; nor did they succeed in this trade, till it came to be united with that of India, and rose in the same proportion.

The Danes and the Swedes began to frequent the ports of China about the same time, and have acted upon the same principles as the French. The Embden company

would probably have adopted them likewise, had it subsisted long enough.

The annual purchases made by the Europeans in China, if we compute them by those of the year 1766, amount to 26,754,494 livres [1,114,770*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*] this sum, above four-fifths of which is laid out in the single article of tea, was paid in piastres, or in goods carried by twenty-three ships. Sweden furnished 1,935,168 livres [80,632*l.*] in money, and 427,500 [17,812*l.* 10*s.*] in tin, lead, and other commodities. Denmark, 2,161,630 livres [90,067*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*] in money, and 231,000 [9625*l.*] in iron, lead, and gun-flints. France, 4,000,000 [166,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] in money, and 400,000 [16,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] in drapery. Holland, 2,735,400 [113,975*l.*] in money, and 44,600 [1858*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] in woollen goods, beside 4,000,150 [166,672*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*] in the produce of her colonies. Great Britain, 5,443,566 livres [226,815*l.* 5*s.*] in money, 2,000,475 [83,353*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*] in woollen cloths, and 3,375,000 [140,625*l.*] in various articles from different parts of India. All these sums together amount to 26,754,494 livres [1,114,771*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*] We do not include in this calculation 10,000,000 [416,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] in specie, which the English have carried over and above what we have mentioned, because they were destined to pay off the debts that nation had contracted, or to lay in a stock to trade upon in the intervals between the voyages.

Conjectures concerning the future state of the trade of Europe in China.

IT is not easy to foresee what this trade will hereafter be. Though the Chinese are so fond of money, they seem more inclined to shut their ports against the Europeans, than to encourage them to extend their trade. As the spirit of the Tartars has subsided, and the conquerors have imbibed the maxims of the vanquished nation, they have adopted their prejudices, and in particular their aversion and contempt of foreigners. They have discovered these dispositions, by the humiliating hardships they have imposed upon them, after having treated them with great respect. The transition is but short from this precarious situation to a total expulsion. It may no not be far off; and this is the more likely, as there is an active nation which is, perhaps, secretly contriving to bring about this event.

The Dutch are not ignorant that all Europe is grown very fond of several Chinese productions. They may readily suppose, that the impossibility of procuring them from the first hand would not hinder the consumption. If all Europeans were excluded from China, the natives would export their own commodities. As their shipping is not fit for a long navigation, they would be under a necessity of carrying them to Batavia or Malaca; and the nation to whom these colonies belong, would immediately get all this trade in its hands. It is dreadful even to suspect these republicans of any thing so base, but it is well known that they have been guilty of more odious acts for interests of less consequence.

If the ports of China were once shut, it is probable they would be so for ever. The obstinacy of that nation would never suffer them to retract, and there is no appearance that they would be compelled to it. What measures could be taken against a state at the distance of eight thousand leagues? No government can be so absurd as to imagine, that men, after the fatigues of so long a voyage, would venture to attempt conquests in a country defended by such a number of people however destitute of courage this nation, which has never tried its strength against the Europeans, may be supposed to be. The only way in which we could distress these people, would be by intercepting their navigation, which is an object they pay little attention to, as it neither affects their subsistence nor their conveniencies.

Even this fruitless revenge would be practicable but for a short time. The ships employed in this piratical cruise would be driven from those latitudes, one part of the year by the monsoons, and the other part by the storms they call typhons, which are peculiar to the seas of China.

Having thus explained the manner in which the Europeans have hitherto carried on the East India trade, it will not be improper to examine three questions, which naturally arise upon the subject and have not yet been decided. 1. Whether it be advisable to continue that trade. 2. Whether large settlements be necessary to carry it on with success. 3. Whether it ought to be left in the hands of exclusive companies. We shall discuss these points with impartiality, as we have no other concern in the cause but the interest of mankind.

All the accounts we have of things, are perverted by ignorance or evil intentions. The politician is guided only by his views; and the merchant by his interest. There is none but the philosopher who knows when to doubt; who is silent, when his knowledge fails him; and who tells the truth, when once he resolves to speak. For indeed, what reward could be offered, of sufficient importance to induce him to deceive mankind, and to forfeit his character? If we suppose it fortunate; he is rich enough, if he have but a sufficiency to satisfy his wants, which are extremely limited. Is it ambition? If he have the happiness of being wife, he may excite the envy of others; but there is nothing under the heavens that he can possibly covet. Is he to be tempted with dignities? He knows they will not be offered to him; and if they should be, he knows that he would not accept them without a certainty of doing good. Is he to be seduced by flattery? He is totally unacquainted with this art, and disdains the contemptible advantages of it. Can he be influenced by fear? He fears nothing; not even death. If he be thrown into a dungeon, he is well aware this is not the first time that tyrants, or fanatics, have plunged virtue into such a situation, from whence she has been taken out merely to be dragged upon a scaffold. It is he who escapes out of the hands of destiny that knows not how to lay hold of him, because he has broken off, as the stoic says, the handles by which the strong seizes upon the weak, and disposes of them at pleasure.

*Whether Europe
should continue
its trade with
India.*

WHOEVER considers Europe as forming but one body, the members of which are united in one common interest, or at least in the same kind of interest, will not hesitate to pronounce, whether her connections with Asia be advantageous or not. The India trade evidently enlarges the circle of our enjoyments. It procures us wholesome and agreeable liquors, conveniencies of a more refined nature, more splendid furniture, some new pleasures, and a more comfortable existence. Such powerful incentives have had the same influence upon those nations, who, from their situation, activity, good fortune in making discoveries, and boldness in enterprises, can procure these enjoyments for themselves at their very source; as

upon those who are unable to acquire them, unless through the channel of the maritime states, whose navigation enabled them to disperse the superfluities of their enjoyments over the whole continent. The Europeans have been so eager in their pursuit after these foreign luxuries, that neither the highest duties, the strictest prohibitions, nor the severest penalties, have been able to restrain it. Every government, after having in vain tried to subdue this inclination, which only increased by opposition, has been forced at last to yield to it; though general prejudices, which were strengthened by time and custom, made them consider this compliance as detrimental to the stability of the common good.

But the time was come, when it became necessary to remove the restraints. Can it be a matter of doubt, whether it be beneficial to add the enjoyments of foreign climates to those of our own? Universal society exists as well for the common interest of the whole, as by the mutual interest of all the individuals that compose it. An increase of felicity must, therefore, result from a general intercourse. Commerce is the exercise of that valuable liberty, to which nature has invited all men; which is the source of their happiness, and indeed of their virtues. We may even venture to assert, that men are never so truly sensible of their freedom as they are in a commercial intercourse; nor is any thing so conducive to it as commercial laws: and one particular advantage derived from this circumstance is, that as trade produces liberty, so it contributes to preserve it.

We must be but little acquainted with man, if we imagine, that, in order to make him happy, he must be debarred from enjoyments. We grant, that the being accustomed to want the conveniencies of life lessens the sum of our misfortunes; but by diminishing our pleasures in a greater proportion than our pains, we are rather brought to a state of insensibility than of happiness. If nature have given man a heart susceptible of tender impressions; if his imagination be for ever involuntarily employed in search of ideal and delusive objects of happiness, it is fit that his restless mind should have an infinite variety of enjoyments to pursue. But let reason teach him to be satisfied with such things as he can enjoy, and not to be anxious for those that are out of his reach; this is true wisdom. But to re-

quire, that reason should make us voluntarily reject what it is in our power to add to our present happiness, is to contradict nature, and to subvert the first principles of society ; it is to transform the universe into one vast monastery, and to change men into so many idle and melancholy anchorets. Let us suppose this project executed ; and, casting our eyes upon the globe, let us ask ourselves, whether we should be better pleased with it in the state we should then see it, than as it was before ?

How shall we persuade man to be content with the few indulgencies that moralists think proper to allow him ? How shall we ascertain the limits of what is necessary, which varies according to his situation in life, his attainments, and his desires ? No sooner had his industry facilitated the means of procuring a subsistence, than the leisure he gained by this was employed in extending the limits of his faculties and the circle of his pleasures. Hence arose all his factitious wants. The discovery of a new species of sensations excited a desire of preserving them, and a propensity to find out others. The perfection of one art introduced the knowledge of several others. The success of a war, occasioned by hunger or revenge, suggested the idea of conquest. Navigation put men under a necessity of destroying one another, or of forming a general union. Commercial treaties between nations parted by the seas, and social compacts between men dispersed upon the earth, bore an exact resemblance to each other. These several relations began by contests, and ended by associations. War and navigation have occasioned a mutual communication between different people and different colonies. Hence men became connected with each other by dependence or intercourse. The refuse of all nations, mixing together during the ravages of war, are improved and polished by commerce ; the true spirit of which is, that all nations should consider themselves as one great society, whose members have all an equal right to partake of the conveniencies of the rest. Commerce, in its object and in the means employed to carry it on, supposes an inclination and a liberty between all nations to make every exchange that can contribute to their mutual satisfaction. The inclination and the liberty of procuring enjoyments are the only two springs of industry, and the only two principles of social intercourse among men.

Those who censure the trade of Europe with India, have

only the following reasons to allege against an universal and free intercourse; that it is attended with a considerable loss of men; that it checks the progress of our industry; and that it lessens our stock of money. . These objections are easily obviated.

As long as every man shall be at liberty to choose a profession, and to employ his abilities in any manner most agreeable to himself, we need not be solicitous about his destiny. As in a state of freedom every thing has its proper value, no man will expose himself to any danger, without expecting an equivalent. In a well regulated society, every individual is at liberty to do what is most conformable to his inclination and his interest, provided it be not inconsistent with the properties and liberties of others. A law, that should prohibit every trade in which a man might endanger his life, would condemn a great part of mankind to starve, and would deprive society of numberless advantages. We need not cross the line to carry on a dangerous trade; since, even in Europe, we may find many occupations far more destructive to the human race than the navigation to India. If the perils attending sea-voyages destroy some of our men, let us only give due encouragement to the culture of our lands, and our population will be so much increased, that we shall be better able to spare those self-devoted victims who are swallowed up by the sea. To this we may add, that most of those who perish in long voyages are lost through accidental causes, which might easily be prevented by more wholesome diet and a more regular life. But if men will add, to the vices prevalent in their own climate, and to the corruption of their own manners, those of the countries where they land, how is it possible that they should resist these united principles of destruction?

Even supposing that the India trade should cost Europe as many men as it is said to do, are we certain that this loss is not compensated by the labours to which that trade gives rise, and which encourage and increase our population? Would not the men, dispersed upon the several ships continually sailing in these latitudes, occupy a place upon land which is now left vacant for others? If we consider attentively the number of people contained in the small territories of maritime powers, we shall be convinced, that it is not the navigation to Asia, nor even navigation in general, that is detrimental to the population of Europe: but, on

the contrary, navigation alone may, perhaps, balance all the causes that tend to the destruction and decrease of mankind. Let us now endeavour to remove the fears of those who apprehend that the India trade never lessens the number of our manufactories at home, and the profits arising from them.

Admitting it true, that it had put a stop to some of our labours, it has given rise to many more. It has introduced into our colonies the culture of sugar, coffee, and indigo. Many of our manufactures are supported by India silk and cotton. If Saxony and other countries in Europe make very fine china; if Valencia manufactures pekings superior to those of China; if Switzerland imitates the muslins and worked calicoes of Bengal; if England and France print linens with great elegance; if so many stuffs, formerly unknown in our climates, now employ our best artists; are we not indebted to India for all these advantages?

Let us proceed further, and suppose that we are not indebted to Asia for any of our improvements, the consumption we make of its commodities cannot therefore be detrimental to our industry; for we pay for them with the produce of our own manufactures exported to America. I sell a hundred livres worth of linen to the Spaniard, and send that money to the East Indies. Another sends the same quantity of the linen itself. We both bring home tea. In fact, we are both doing the same thing; we are changing a hundred livres worth of linen into tea; the only difference is, that the one does it by two transactions, and the other by a single one. Suppose the Spaniard, instead of giving me money, had given me goods that were saleable in India, I should not have hindered our artificers by carrying them thither. Is it not the very same thing as if I had carried our own produce there? I sail from Europe with the merchandize and manufactures of my own country; I go to the South sea, and exchange them for piastres; I carry those piastres to India, and bring home things that are either useful or agreeable. Have I been the means of restraining the industry of my country? Far from it; I have extended the consumption of its produce, and multiplied the enjoyment of my countrymen. The circumstance that misleads the opposers of the India trade is, that the piastres are brought over to Europe before they are carried to Asia.

But finally, whether the money be or be not employed as the intermediate pledge of exchange, I have either directly or indirectly made an exchange with Asia, and bartered goods for goods, my manufactory for theirs, my productions for their productions.

But it is objected by some discontented men, that India has at all times swallowed up all the treasures of the universe. Ever since chance has taught men the use of metals, say these censurers, they have never ceased to search for them. Avarice, ever restless, has not forsaken these barren rocks, where nature has wisely concealed those insidious treasures. Since they were taken out of the bowels of the earth, they have constantly been diffused upon the surface of it; and notwithstanding the extreme opulence of the Romans, and of some other nations, they have disappeared from Europe, Africa, and some parts of Asia. India hath entirely absorbed them. Riches are all taking the same course; passing on continually from west to east, and never returning. It is therefore for India, that the mines of Peru have been opened; and for the Indians, that the Europeans have been guilty of so many crimes in America. While the Spaniards are lavishing the lives of their slaves in Mexico to obtain silver out of the bowels of the earth, the banians take still more pains to bury it again. If ever the wealth of Potosi should be exhausted, we must go in search for it on the coast of Malabar where we have sent it. When we have drained India of its pearls and spices, we shall, perhaps, by force of arms recover from them the sums those luxuries have cost us. Thus shall our cruelties and caprices remove the gold and silver into other climes, where avarice and superstition will again bury them under ground.

These complaints are not altogether groundless. Ever since the rest of the world have opened a communication with India, they have constantly exchanged gold and silver for arts and commodities. Nature has supplied the Indians with the few necessities they want; their climate will not admit of our luxuries; and their religion gives them an abhorrence for some things that we feed upon. As their customs, manners, and government, have continued the same, notwithstanding the revolutions that have overturned their country, we must not expect they should ever alter. India ever was, and ever will be, what it now is. As long as any

trade is carried on there, money will be brought in, and goods sent out. But before we exclaim against the abuse of this trade, we should attend to its progress, and consider what is the result of it.

First, it is certain our gold does not go to India. It has gold of its own, besides constant supply from Monomotapa, which comes by the eastern coast of Africa, and by the Red sea; from the Turks, which is brought by the way of Arabia and Bassora; and from Persia, which is conveyed both by the ocean and the continent. This enormous mass is never increased by the gold we procure from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. In a word, we are so far from carrying gold to Asia, that for a long while we have carried silver to China to barter it against gold.

Even the silver which India gets from us is by no means so considerable as may be imagined from the immense quantity of Indian goods we bring home. The annual sale of these goods has of late years amounted to an hundred and sixty millions [6,666,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*] Supposing they have cost but half of what they sold for, eighty millions [3,333,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] must have been sent to India to purchase them, besides what must have been sent over for our settlements. We shall not scruple to affirm, that, for some time past, all Europe has not carried thither more than twenty-four millions [1,000,000*l.*] a year. Eight millions [333,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] are sent from France, six [250,000*l.*] from Holland, three [125,000*l.*] from England, three [125,000*l.*] from Denmark, two [83,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] from Sweden, and two [83,333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*] from Portugal.

This calculation will not appear improbable, if we consider, that though in general India be in no want either of our produce or of our manufactures, yet it receives from us, in iron, lead, copper, woollens, and other less articles, to the full amount of one fifth of the commodities we buy there.

This mode of payment is augmented by the produce of the European settlements in Asia. The most considerable are those of the spice islands for the Dutch, and of Bengal for the English.

The fortunes made by the free traders and agents in India contribute also to lessen the exportation of our specie. Those industrious men deposit their stock in the coffers of their own country, or of some other nation, to be repaid.

them in Europe, whither they all return sooner or later. Therefore a part of the India trade is carried on with money got in the country.

Particular events also put us sometimes in possession of the treasures of the east. It is undeniable, that by the revolutions in the decan and Bengal, and by disposing of these empires at pleasure, the French and the English have obtained the wealth accumulated in these opulent regions for so many ages. It is evident that these sums, joined to others less considerable, which the Europeans have acquired by their superior skill and bravery, must have retained a great deal of specie among them, which otherwise would have gone into Asia.

That rich part of the world has even restored to us some of the treasure we had poured into it. The expedition of Kouli Khan into India is universally known ; but it is not equally so, that he wrested from the effeminate and cowardly people of this country upwards of 2,000,000,000 livres [83,333,333l. 6s. 8d.] in specie, or in valuable effects. The emperors palace alone contained inestimable and innumerable treasures. The presence-chamber was covered with plates of gold ; the ceiling was set with diamonds. Twelve pillars of massive gold, adorned with pearls and precious stones, surrounded the throne, the canopy of which was remarkably beautiful, and represented a peacock, with wings and tail extended to overshadow the monarch. The diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and all the sparkling gems which composed this curious piece of workmanship, perfectly imitated the colours of this beautiful bird. No doubt part of that wealth is returned into India. Much of the treasure brought to Persia from the conquest of the mogul, must have been buried under ground during the subsequent wars ; but the several branches of commerce must certainly have brought some to Europe, through such channels as are too well known to make it necessary to specify them.

Admitting that none of these riches have reached us, the opinion of those who condemn the trade of India, because it is carried on with specie, will not be better supported, which may be easily proved. Gold and silver are not the produce of our soil, but of America, and are sent us in exchange for the productions of our own country. If Europe did not remit them to Asia, America would soon be

unable to return any to Europe. The too great plenty of it on our continent would so reduce its value, that the nations who bring it to us could no longer get it from their colonies. When once an ell of linen cloth, which is now worth twenty shillings [10d.] rises to a pistole [16s. 9d.] the Spaniards cannot buy it of us, to carry it to the country which produces silver. The working of their mines is expensive. When this expence shall have increased to ten times that sum, and the value of silver is still the same, the business of working in the mines will be more costly than profitable to the owners, who will consequently give it up. No more gold and silver will come from the new world to the old; and the Americans will be obliged to neglect their richest mines, as they have gradually forsaken the less valuable ones. This event would have taken place before, if they had not found a way of disposing of about 3,000,000,000 [125,000,000l.] in Asia, by the Cape of Good Hope, or by the Philippine islands. Therefore this circulation of money into India, which so many prejudiced persons have hitherto considered as a ruinous exportation, has been beneficial both to Spain, by supporting the only manufacture she hath, and to other nations, who without it could never have disposed of their produce, or of the fruits of their industry. Having thus justified the Indian trade, we shall next proceed to inquire, whether it hath been conducted on the principles of sound policy.

Whether it be necessary that the Europeans should have large establishments.

ALL the nations in Europe, who have sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, have aimed at founding great empires in Asia. The Portuguese, who led the way to those wealthy regions, first set us the example of a boundless ambition. Not content with having made themselves masters of the islands in which the choicest productions were to be found, and erected fortresses wherever they were necessary to secure to themselves the navigation of the east, they aspired also to the authority of giving laws to Malabar, which, being divided into several petty sovereignties, that were jealous of, or at enmity with each other, was forced to submit to the yoke.

The Spaniards did not at first shew more moderation;

even before they had completed the conquest of the Philippine islands, which were to be the centre of their power, they strove to extend their dominion further. If they have not since subdued the rest of that immense archipelago, or filled all the adjacent countries with their enormities, we must look for the cause of their tranquillity in the treasures of America, which have confined their pursuits, though they did not satisfy their desires.

The Dutch deprived the Portuguese of their most considerable posts on the continent, and drove them out of the spice islands. They have preserved those possessions, and some later acquisitions only by establishing a form of government, less oppressive than that of the nations on whose ruins they were rising.

The slowness and irresolution of the French in their proceedings, prevented them for a considerable time from forming or executing any great projects. As soon as they found themselves sufficiently powerful, they availed themselves of the subversion of the power of the moguls to usurp the dominion of Coromandel. They obtained by conquest, or by artful negotiations, a more extensive territory than any European power had ever possessed in Indostan.

The English, more prudent, did not attempt to aggrandise themselves till they had deprived the French of their acquisitions, and till no rival nation could act against them. The certainty of having none but the natives of the country to contend with, determined them to attack Bengal. This was the province of all India which afforded most commodities fit for the markets of Asia and Europe, and was likely to consume most of their manufactures: it was also that which their fleet could most effectually protect, as it hath the advantage of a great river. They have succeeded in their plan of conquest, and flatter themselves they shall long enjoy the fruits of their victory.

Their successes, and those of the French, have astonished all nations. It is easy to conceive how solitary and defenceless islands, that have no connection with their neighbours, may have been subdued. But it is very astonishing, that five or six hundred Europeans, should at this time have beaten innumerable armies of gentiles and mohammedans, most of them skilled in the art of war. These extraordi-

nary scenes, however, ought not to appear surprising to any one who considers what has happened before.

The Portuguese had no sooner appeared in the east, than with a few ships and a few soldiers they subverted whole kingdoms. The establishment of some factories, and the building of a small number of forts, was sufficient to enable them to crush the powers of India. When the Indians were no longer oppressed by the first conquerors, they were so by those who expelled and succeeded them. The history of these delightful regions was no longer the history of the natives, but that of their tyrants.

But what singular men must these have been, who never could gather any improvement from experience and adversity; who surrendered themselves to their common enemy without making any resistance, and who never acquired skill enough from their continual defeats to repulse a few adventurers, cast, as it were, from the sea upon their coasts! It is a matter of doubt whether these men, alternately deceived and subdued by those who attacked them, were not of a different species. To resolve this problem, we need only trace the causes of this weakness in the Indians; and our first inquiry shall turn upon that system of despotism with which they are oppressed.

There is no nation, which, as it becomes civilized, does not lose something of its virtue, courage, and independence; and it is evident that the inhabitants of the south of Asia, having been first collected into societies, must have been the earliest exposed to despotism. Such has been the progress of all associations from the beginning of the world. Another truth, equally evident from history, is, that all arbitrary power hastens its own destruction; and that the revolutions will restore liberty, sooner or later, as they are more or less rapid. Indostan is perhaps the only country, in which the inhabitants, after having once lost their rights, have never been able to recover them. Tyrants have frequently been destroyed, but tyranny has always supported itself.

Civil slavery has been added in India to political slavery. The Indian is not master of his own life; he knows of no law that will protect it from the caprice of the tyrant, or the fury of his delegates. He is not master of his own understanding; he is debarred from all studies that are bene-

ficial to mankind, and only allowed such as tend to enslave him. He is not master of his own field; the lands and their produce belong to the sovereign, and the labourer may be satisfied if he can earn enough to subsist himself and family. He is not master of his own industry, every artist, who has had the misfortune to betray some abilities, is in danger of being doomed to serve the monarch, his deputies, or some rich man, who has purchased a right to employ him at pleasure. He is not master of his own wealth: he buries his gold under ground, to secure it from the rapacious hand of power; and leaves it there at his death, absurdly imagining it will be of service to him in the next world. No doubt this absolute and tyrannical authority, with which the Indian is continually oppressed, must subdue his spirit, and render him incapable of those efforts that courage requires.

The climate of Indostan is another impediment to any generous exertions. The indolence it inspires is an invincible obstacle to great revolutions and vigorous oppositions, so common in the northern regions. The body and the mind equally enervated, have only the virtues and vices of slavery. In the second, or at farthest in the third generation, Tartars, Turks, Persians, and even Europeans, contract the slothful disposition of the Indians. These influences of the climate might certainly be subdued by religious or moral institutions; but the superstitions of the country will not admit of such exalted views. They never promise future rewards to the generous patriot who falls in his country's cause. While they advise, and sometimes command suicide, by representing in a strong light the alluring prospect of future happiness, they at the same time strictly forbid the effusion of blood.

This circumstance is a necessary consequence of the doctrine of transmigration, which must inspire its followers with constant and universal benevolence. They are in continual fear of injuring their neighbours, that is, all men and all animals. How can a man reconcile himself to the idea of being a soldier, when he can say, perhaps the elephant or the horse I am going to destroy may contain the soul of my father—perhaps the enemy I shall kill has formerly been the chief of my family? Thus, in India, religion tends to keep up the spirit of cowardice which results from despotism and

the nature of the climate ; the manners of the people contribute still more to increase it.

In every country, love is the ruling passion ; but it is not equally strong in every climate. While northern nations are moderate in their desires, the southern ones indulge in them with a degree of ardour superior to every restraint. The policy of princes has sometimes turned this passion to the advantage of society ; but the legislators of India seem to have principally intended to increase the fatal influence of their ardent climate. The moguls, the last conquerors of those regions, have proceeded still further. Love is with them a shameful and destructive excess, consecrated by religion, by the laws, and by government. The military conduct of the nations of Indostan, whether pagan or mohammedans, is consistent with their dissolute manners. We shall mention some particulars taken from the writings of an English officer remarkable for his military exploits in those parts.

The soldiers make up the smallest part of the Indian camps. Every trooper is attended by his wife, his children and two servants ; one to look after his horse, and the other to forage. The train of the officers and generals is proportionable to their vanity, their fortune, and their rank. The sovereign himself, more intent upon making a parade of his magnificence than upon the necessities of war, when he takes the field, carries along with him his seraglio, his elephants, his court, and almost all the inhabitants of his capital. To provide for the wants, the fancies, and the luxury of this strange multitude, a kind of town must of course be formed in the midst of the army, full of magazines and unnecessary articles. The motions of a body so unwieldy and so ill arranged cannot be but very slow. There is great confusion in their marches, and in all their operations. However abstemious the Indians, and even the moguls, may be, they often experience a want of provisions ; and famine is usually attended with contagious distempers, and occasions a dreadful mortality.

These distempers, however, seldom destroy any but recruits. Though, in general, the inhabitants of Indostan affect a strong passion for military glory, yet they engage in war as seldom as they can. Those who have been so successful in battle as to obtain some marks of distinction,

are excused from serving for some time ; and there are few that do not avail themselves of this privilege. The retreat of these veterans reduces the army to a contemptible body of soldiers, levied in haste in the several provinces of the empire, and who are utterly unacquainted with discipline.

The nature of the provisions on which these troops subsist, and their manner of living, is entirely consistent with this improper mode of raising them. At night they eat a prodigious quantity of rice ; and after this meal they take strong opiates, which throw them into a deep sleep. Notwithstanding this pernicious custom, no guards are placed about their camp to prevent a surprise ; nor is it possible to make a soldier rise early, even to execute any enterprise that may require the greatest dispatch.

The military operations are regulated by birds of prey, of which there are always a great number in the army. If they be found heavy or languid, it is an unfavourable omen, and prevents the army from giving battle : if they be fierce and violent, the troops march out to action, whatever reasons there may be for avoiding or deferring it. This superstition, as well as the observance of lucky and unlucky days, determines the fate of the best concerted designs.

No order is observed in marching. Every soldier goes on as he chooses, and only follows the corps to which he belongs. He is frequently seen carrying his provisions upon his head, with the vessels for dressing them ; while his arms are carried by his wife, who is commonly followed by several children. If a foot soldier has any relations, or business to transact in the enemy's army, he is under no apprehension in going to it ; and returns to join his colours without meeting with the least opposition.

The action is not better conducted than the preparations for it. The cavalry, in which consists the whole strength of an Indian army (for the infantry are holden in general contempt), are useful enough in charging with the sword and spear, but can never stand the fire of cannon and musquetry. They are afraid of losing their horses, which are mostly Arabian, Persian, or Tartar, and in which their whole fortune consists. The troops that compose this cavalry are in great esteem, and well paid : they are so fond of their horses, that sometimes they will go into mourning upon losing them.

The Indians dread the enemy's artillery, as much as they confide in their own; though they neither know how to transport it, nor how to make use of it. Their great guns, which are called by pompous names, are generally of a very extraordinary size, and rather prevent than assist the gaining of a victory.

Those who are ambitious of being distinguished, intoxicate themselves with opium, to which they ascribe the property of warming the blood, and of animating them to the performance of heroic actions. In this temporary state of intoxication, they bear a greater resemblance, in their dress and impotent rage, to women actuated by a spirit of enthusiasm, than to men of courage and resolution.

The prince who commands these despicable troops is always mounted on an elephant richly caparisoned, where he is at once the general and the standard of the whole army, whose eyes are fixed upon him. If he should fly, or be slain, the whole machine is destroyed; the several corps disperse, or go over to the enemy.

This description, which we might have enlarged upon without exaggeration, renders probable the account given of our successes in Indostan. Many Europeans, judging of what might be effected in the inland parts, by what has been done on the coasts, imagine we might safely undertake the conquest of the whole country. This extreme confidence arises from the following circumstance: that in places where the enemy could not harass their troops in the rear, nor intercept their succours, they have overcome timorous weavers and merchants, undisciplined and cowardly armies, weak princes jealous of each other, and perpetually at war with their neighbours or their own subjects. They do not consider, that, if they wanted to penetrate into the interior parts, they would all perish before they had proceeded half way up the country. The excessive heat of the climate, continual fatigue, numberless diseases, want of provision, and a variety of other causes, would soon considerably diminish their numbers, even though they had nothing to apprehend from those troops that might molest them.

We will suppose, however, that ten thousand European soldiers had actually over-run and ravaged India from one end to the other; what would be the consequence? Would these forces be sufficient to secure the conquest, to keep

every nation, every province, every district, in order? And if this number be not sufficient, let it be calculated what number of troops would be necessary for the purpose.

But let us admit that the conquerors had firmly established their government in India, they would still reap very little advantage from this circumstance. The revenues of Indostan would be spent in Indostan itself. The European power, that had pursued this project of usurpation, would have experienced nothing but a considerable decrease in its population, and the disgrace of having followed a visionary system.

This, indeed, is now an useless question, since the Europeans themselves have made their success in Indostan more difficult than ever. By engaging the natives to take a part in their mutual dissensions, they have taught them the art of war, and trained them to arms and discipline. This error in politics has opened the eyes of the sovereigns of those countries, whose ambition has been excited to establish regular troops. Their cavalry marches in better order; and their infantry, which was always considered in so despicable a light, has now acquired the firmness of our battalions. A numerous and well-managed artillery defends their camps and protects their attacks. The armies, composed of better troops, and better paid, have been able to keep the field longer.

This change which might have been foreseen, had the Europeans not been blinded by temporary interest, may in time become so considerable, as to raise unfurmountable obstacles to the desire they have of extending their conquest in Indostan, and possibly they may loose those they have already made. Whether this will be a misfortune or an advantage, is what we shall next take into consideration.

When the Europeans first began to trade in that wealthy region, they found it divided into a great many small states, some of which were governed by princes of their own nation, and some by Patan kings. Their mutual hatred was the occasion of continual contests. Beside the wars that were carried on between province and province, there was a perpetual one between every sovereign and his subjects. It was fomented by the tax-gatherers, who, to ingratiate themselves at court, always levied heavier taxes than had been laid on the people. These barbarians aggravated this

heavy burden by the oppressions they made the inhabitants suffer. Their extortions were only another method of securing to themselves the posts they enjoyed, in a country where he was always in the right who had the most to give.

From this anarchy, and these violent proceedings, it was imagined, that, to settle a safe and permanent commerce, it was necessary to support it by the force of arms; and the European factories were accordingly fortified. In process of time, jealousy, which divides the European nations in India, as it does every where else, exposed them to more considerable expences. Each of these foreign nations thought it necessary to augment their forces, lest they should be overpowered by their rivals.

The dominion of the Europeans, however, extended no further than their own fortresses. Goods were brought thither from the inland parts with little difficulty, or with such as was easily overcome. Even after the conquests of Kouli-Khan had plunged the north of Indostan into confusion, the coast of Coromandel enjoyed its former tranquillity. But the death of Nizam-al-Muluc, subah of the decan, kindled a flame which is not yet extinguished.

The disposal of these immense spoils naturally belonged to the court of Delhi; but the weakness of that court emboldened the children of Nizam to dispute their father's treasure. To supplant each other, they had recourse alternately to arms, to treachery, to poison, and to assassinations. Most of the adventurers they engaged in their animosities and crimes perished during these horrid transactions. The Marattas alone, a nation who alternately sided with both parties, and often had troops in each, seemed as if they would avail themselves of this anarchy, and invade the sovereignty of the decan. The Europeans have pretended it was greatly their interest to oppose this deep but secret design, and they allege the following reasons in their defence.

The Marattas, say they, are thieves, both from education and from their political principles. They have no regard to the law of nations, no notion of natural or civil right, and spread desolation wherever they go. The most populous districts are abandoned at the very report of their approach. In the countries they have subdued, nothing is to

be seen but confusion, and all the manufactures are destroyed.

The Europeans, who were most powerful on the coast of Coromandel, thought such neighbours would utterly destroy their trade; and they could never venture to send money by their agents to buy goods in the inland countries, as they would certainly be plundered by these banditti. The desire of preventing this evil, which must ruin their fortunes, and deprive them of the benefit of their settlements, suggested to their agents the idea of a new system.

It was asserted, that, in the present situation of Indostan, it was impossible to keep up useful connections without a military establishment; that, at so great a distance from the mother-country, the expence could not possibly be defrayed out of the mere profits of trade, were they ever so great: that therefore it was absolutely necessary to procure sufficient possessions to answer these great expences; and consequently, that the possessions must be considerable.

This argument, probably suggested to conceal insatiable avarice or boundless ambition, and which the passion for conquest may have occasioned to be considered as a very strong one, may perhaps be a mere illusion. A variety of natural, moral, and political, reasons may be urged in opposition to it. We shall only insist upon one, which is founded upon a fact. From the Portuguese, who first attempted to aggrandize themselves in India, to the English, who close the fatal list of usurpers, not one acquisition, however important or trifling, except Bengal and the spice islands, hath ever paid the expence of taking and supporting it. The more extensive the possessions have been, the greater has been the expence of maintaining them to the ambitious power that had, by whatever means, acquired them.

This is what will always happen. Every nation that has obtained a large territory will be desirous of preserving it. It will think there is no safety but in fortified places, and will constantly multiply them. This warlike appearance will deter the husbandman and the artist, who will not expect to enjoy tranquillity. The neighbouring princes will grow jealous, and will justly be afraid of falling a prey to a trading nation now become a conquering one. In consequence of this, they will be devising means to ruin an oppressor, whom they had admitted into their harbours, with

no other view than to increase their own treasures and power. If they find themselves under a necessity of entering into a treaty, they will, at the instant of signing, secretly vow the destruction of their new ally. Falsehood will be the basis of all their agreements; and the longer they have been forced to dissemble, the more time they will have had to prepare the means destined to destroy their enemy.

The just apprehension of these perfidies will oblige the usurpers to be always upon their guard. If they are to be defended by Europeans, what a consumption of men for the mother-country! what an expence to raise them, to transport them into these countries, to maintain and recruit them! If, from a principle of economy, they content themselves with the Indian troops, what can be expected from a confused and unprincipled multitude, whose expeditions always degenerate into robbery, and constantly end in a shameful and precipitate flight? Their principles, whether natural or moral, are so weakened, that even the defence of their gods and their own households could never inspire the boldest among them with any thing beyond a sudden and transient exertion of intrepidity. It is not probable that foreign interests, ruinous to their country, should ever animate men whose minds are sunk in indolence and corruption: is it not more probable that they will be ever ready to betray a cause they abhor, and in which they find no immediate and lasting advantage?

To these inconveniencies will be added a spirit of extortion and plunder, which even in the times of peace will nearly resemble the devastations of war. The agents, intrusted with those remote concerns, will be desirous of making rapid fortunes. The slow and regular profits of trade they will not attend to, but will endeavour to promote speedy revolutions in order to acquire great wealth. They will have occasioned innumerable evils before they can be controuled by authority at the distance of six thousand leagues. This authority will have no force against millions; or the persons intrusted with it will arrive too late to prevent the fall of an edifice supported on so weak a foundation.

This result makes it needless to inquire into the nature of the political engagements the Europeans have entered into

with the powers of India. If these great acquisitions be prejudicial, the treaties made to procure them cannot be rational. If the merchants of Europe be wise, they will forego the rage of conquest, and the flattering hopes of holding the balance of Asia.

The court of Delhi will finally sink under the weight of intestine divisions, or fortune will raise up a prince capable of restoring it. The government will remain feudal, or once more become despotic. The empire will be divided into many independent states, or will be subject only to one master. Either the Marattas or the moguls will become a ruling power; but the Europeans should not be concerned in these revolutions; whatever be the fate of Indostan, the Indians will still continue their manufactures, our merchants will purchase them, and sell them again to us.

It would be needless to allege, that the spirit which has always prevailed in those countries has forced us to depart from their common rules of trade; that we are in arms upon the coasts; that this position unavoidably obliges us to interfere with the affairs of our neighbours; and that, if we avoid all intercourse with them, such a reserve will certainly prove extremely detrimental to our interests. These fears will appear groundless to sensible men, who know that a war in those distant regions must be still more fatal to the Europeans than to the natives; and that the consequence will be, that we must either subdue the whole, which is scarcely possible, or be for ever expelled from a country where it is our advantage to maintain our connections.

The love of order and tranquillity would even make it desirable to extend these pacific views; and, far from thinking that great possessions are necessary, time will probably discover even the inutility of fortified posts. The Indians are naturally gentle and humane, though crushed under the severe yoke of despotism. The nations who formerly traded with them, always commended them for their candour and honesty. The Indians are now in a state of confusion, equally alarming to them and to us. Our ambition has carried discord into all parts of their country, and our rapaciousness has inspired them with hatred, fear, and contempt for our continent; they look upon us as conquerors, usurpers and oppressors, sanguinary and avaricious men.

This is the character we have acquired in the East. Our examples have increased the number of their national vices, at the same time that we have taught them to be in guard against ours.

If in our transactions with the Indians we had been guided by principles of probity; if we had shewn them, that mutual advantage is the basis of commerce; if we had encouraged their cultivation and manufactures, by exchanges equally advantageous to both; we should insensibly have gained their affections. If we had fortunately taken care to preserve their confidence in our dealings with them, we might have removed their prejudices, and, perhaps, changed their form of government. We should have succeeded so far as to have lived among them, and trained up civilized nations around us, who would have protected our settlements for our mutual interests. Every one of our establishments would have been to each nation in Europe as their native country, where they would have found a sure protection. Our situation in India is the consequence of our profligacy and of the sanguinary systems we have introduced there. The Indians imagine nothing is due to us, because all our actions have shewn, that we did not think ourselves under any ties with respect to them.

This state of perpetual contention is displeasing to most of the Asiatic nations, and they ardently wish for a happier change. The disorder of our affairs must have inspired us with the same sentiments. If we be all in the same dispositions, and if one common interest should really incline us to peace and harmony, the most effectual way to attain this desirable end would perhaps be, that all the European nations, who trade to India, should agree among themselves to preserve a neutrality in those remote seas, which should never be interrupted by the disturbances that so frequently happen on our own continent. If we could once consider ourselves as members of one great commonwealth, we should not want those forces which make us odious abroad, and ruinous at home. But, as our present spirit of discord will not permit us to expect that such a change can soon take place, it remains only that we now consider, whether Europe ought still to carry on the commerce of India by charter companies, or to make it a free trade.

If this question were to be decided upon general principles, it would be easily answered. If we ask whether, in a state which allows any particular branch of trade, every citizen has a right to partake

of it; the answer is so plain as to leave no room for discussion. It would be unnatural that subjects, who share alike the burden and public expence of civil society, should not be alike partakers of the benefits arising from the compact that unites them: they would have cause to complain, that they sustain all the inconveniencies of society, and are deprived of the advantages they expected to receive from it.

On the other hand, political notions are perfectly reconcilable with these ideas of justice. It is well known that freedom is the very soul of commerce, and that nothing else can bring it to perfection. It is generally allowed that competition awakens industry, and gives it all the vigour it is capable of acquiring. Yet for upwards of a century, the practice has constantly been contradictory to these principles.

All the nations of Europe, that trade to India, carry on that commerce by exclusive companies; and it must be confessed, that this practice is plausible, because it is hardly conceivable that great and enlightened nations should have been under a mistake for above an hundred years on so important a point, and that neither experience nor argument should have undeceived them. We must conclude, therefore, that either the advocates for liberty have given too great a latitude to their principles, or that the favourers of exclusive privilege have too strenuously asserted the necessity of such limitations; possibly, both parties, from too great an attachment to their respective opinions, have been deceived, and are equally distant from the truth.

Ever since this famous question has been debated, it has always been thought to be a very simple one; it has always been supposed that an India company must necessarily be exclusive, and that its existence was essentially connected with its privilege. Hence the advocates for a free trade have asserted that exclusive privileges were odious; and, therefore, that there ought to be no company. Their opponents have argued, on the contrary, that the nature of

things required a company ; and therefore that there must be an exclusive charter. But if we can make it appear that the reasons urged against charters prove nothing against companies in general, and that the circumstances which may render it necessary to have an India company, do not supply any argument in favour of a charter ; if we can demonstrate that the nature of things requires, indeed, a powerful association, a company for the India trade ; but that the exclusive charter is connected only with particular causes, inasmuch that the company may exist without the charter ; we shall then have traced the source of the common error, and found out the solution of the difficulty.

Let us inquire what constitutes the particular nature of commercial transactions. It is the climate, the produce, the distance of places, the form of the government, the genius and manners of the people who are subject to it. In the trade with India, the merchant must undertake a voyage of six thousand leagues in search of the commodities which the country supplies : he must arrive there at a certain season, and wait till another for the proper winds to return home. Therefore every voyage takes up about two years, and the proprietors of the vessels must wait this time for their returns. This is the first and a very material circumstance.

The nature of a government in which there is neither safety nor property will not permit the people to have any public marts, or to lay up any stores. Let us represent to ourselves men who are depressed and corrupted by despotism, workmen who are unable to undertake any thing of themselves ; and, on the other hand, nature more liberal in her gifts, than power is rapacious, supplying a slothful people with food sufficient for their wants and their desires ; and we shall wonder that any industry should be found in India. And indeed it may be affirmed, that scarce any manufacture would be carried on there, if the workmen were not encouraged by ready money, or if the goods were not engaged for a year before they are wanted. One third of the money is paid at the time the work is ordered, another when it is half done, and the remainder on delivery of the goods. From this mode of payment there is a considerable difference made, both in price and in the quality of the goods ; but from hence likewise arises a necessity of

having one's capital out a year longer, that is, three years instead of two. This is an alarming circumstance for a private man, especially if we consider the largeness of the capital that is requisite for such undertakings.

As the charges of navigation and the risks are very great, they cannot be supported without bringing home complete cargoes, that is, cargoes of a million or a million and a half of livres [from 41,666l. 13s. 4d. to 62,500l.] at prime cost in India. Where shall we find merchants, or even men possessed of a sufficient capital to enable them to advance such a sum, to be reimbursed only at the end of three years? Undoubtedly there are very few in Europe; and among those who might have the power, scarce any would have the will. If we consult experience, we shall find that men of moderate fortunes only are the persons who are inclined to run great risks, in order to make great profits. But when once a man is possessed of an ample fortune, he is inclined to enjoy it, and to enjoy it with security. The desire of riches cannot indeed be satisfied by the possession of them, which, on the contrary, frequently, increases it; but, at the same time, the possession of wealth furnishes various means of gratifying that desire without either trouble or danger. This opens to our view the necessity of entering into associations, where a number of men will not scruple to be concerned, because every individual will venture but a small part of his fortune, and will rate the measure of his profits upon the united stock of the whole society. This necessity will appear still more evident, if we consider how the business of buying and selling is managed in India, and what precautions it requires.

To make a previous agreement for a cargo, above fifty different agents must be employed, who are dispersed in different parts, at the distance of three, four, and five hundred leagues from each other. When the work is done, it must be examined and measured; otherwise the goods would soon be found faulty, from the want of honesty in the workmen, who are equally corrupted by the nature of their government, and by the influence of crimes of every kind which the Europeans have set them the example of for these three centuries past.

After all these details, there are still other operations remaining equally necessary. There must be whistlers, men-

to beat the linens, packers, and bleaching grounds, which must be supplied with pools of water fit for the purpose. It would certainly be very difficult for individuals to attend and to observe all these precautions; but even admitting it possible for industry to effect this, yet it could only be done as long as each of them could keep up a continued trade, and regularly ship off fresh cargoes. All these particulars are not to be executed in a short time, and not without established connections. Every private man, therefore, should be able to fit out a ship annually during three years, that is, to disburse four millions of livres [166,666l. 13s. 4d.] This is evidently impossible; and it is plain that such an undertaking can only be carried into execution by a society.

But, perhaps, some commercial houses will be established in India, on purpose to transact this previous business, and to keep cargoes in readiness for the ships that are to be sent off to Europe.

This establishment of trading houses at six thousand leagues from the mother-country, with the immense stock that would be requisite to pay the weavers in advance, seems to be a visionary scheme, inconsistent with reason and experience. Can it be seriously imagined that any merchants, who have already acquired a fortune in Europe, will transmit it to Asia to purchase a stock of muslins, in expectation of ships that, perhaps, may never arrive, or, if they should, may be but few in number, and may not have a sufficient capital to purchase with? On the contrary, we see that every European, who has made a small fortune in India, is desirous of returning home; and, instead of endeavouring to increase it by those easy methods that private trade and the service of the companies offers in that country, he is rather anxious to come and enjoy it with tranquillity in his own.

If other proofs and examples were necessary, we need only attend to what passes in America. If we could suppose that commerce, and the hopes of the profits arising from it, were capable of alluring rich Europeans to quit their native country, it would certainly be in order to settle in that part of the world which is much nearer than Asia, and where they would find the same laws and manners as in Europe. It might naturally be supposed that the mer-

chants should previously buy up the sugars of the planters, and keep them in readiness to be delivered to the European ships as soon as they arrive, on receiving other commodities in exchange, which they would afterwards sell to the planters when they wanted them. But it is quite the contrary. The merchants settled in America are nothing more than commissaries or factors, who transact the exchanges between the planters and the Europeans; and are so far from being able to carry on any considerable trade on their own account, that, when a ship has not met with an opportunity of disposing of her lading, it is left in trust, on the account of the owner, in the hands of the commissary to whom it was consigned. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that what is not practised in America would still be less so in Asia, where a larger stock would be wanted, and greater difficulties must be encountered. Add to this, that the supposed establishment of commercial houses in India would not supersede the necessity of forming companies in Europe; because it would be equally necessary to disburse twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres [from 50,000*l.* to 62,500*l.*] for the fitting out of every ship, which could never return into the stock till the third year at soonest.

This necessity being once proved in every possible case, it is manifest that the trade of India is of such a nature, that very few merchants, if any, can undertake it upon their own capital, or carry it on by themselves, and without the help of a great number of partners. Having demonstrated the necessity of these societies, we must now endeavour to prove, that their interest, and the nature of things, would incline them to unite in one and the same company.

This proposition depends upon two principal reasons: the danger of competition in the purchases and sales, and the necessity of assortments.

The competition of buyers and sellers reduces the commodities to their just value. When the competition of sellers, is greater than that of buyers, the goods sell for less than they are worth; and when there are more buyers than sellers, their price is raised beyond their ordinary value. Let us apply this to the India trade.

When we suppose that this trade will extend in proportion to the number of private ships sent there, we are not:

aware that this multiplicity will only increase the competition on the side of the buyers; whereas it is not in our power to increase it on the side of the sellers. It is just the same as if we were to advise a number of traders to bid over one another, in order to obtain their goods at a cheaper rate.

The Indians scarce make any consumption of the produce either of our lands or manufactures. They have few wants, little ambition, and no great share of industry. They would readily dispense with the gold and silver of America, which is so far from procuring them any enjoyments, that it only serves to support the tyranny under which they are oppressed. Thus, as all objects of exchange have no value but in proportion to the wants or the fancy of the exchangers, it is evident that in India our commodities are worth very little, while those we buy there are of great value. As long as no Indian ships come into our harbours to carry away our stuffs and our metals, we may venture to affirm, that those people are in no want of us, and will consequently make their own terms in all their dealings with us. Hence it follows, that the greater number there are of European merchants who are concerned in this trade, the more the produce of India will rise, and our own sink, in value; and that at last it will be only by immense exports that we shall be able to procure any Indian goods. But if, in consequence of this order of things, each particular society be obliged to export more money, without bringing home more goods, its trade must be very disadvantageous, and the same competition that began its ruin in Asia will complete it in Europe: because the number of sellers being then greater, while that of buyers still continues the same, the societies will be obliged to sell at a lower price, after having bought at an advanced one.

The article of assortments is not of less consequence. By assortments is meant the combination of all the several sorts of commodities that the different parts of India produce; a combination which is proportioned to the present plenty or scarcity of each kind of commodity in Europe. On this chiefly depends the success and all the profits of the trade. But nothing would be more difficult in the practice for private societies than this assortment. How, indeed, should these small societies, unconnected with each other,

whose interest it is to conceal their mutual transactions, acquire the knowledge that is requisite for this important purpose? How could they direct such a multitude of agents as must be employed? It is plain that the supercargoes and commissaries, incapable of general views, would be all asking for the same sort of goods at the same time, in hopes of making a greater profit. This would of course enhance the price of that article in India, and lower it in Europe, to the great detriment of the owners, and of the nation in general.

All these considerations would certainly be perceived by the captains of ships and by the men of property, who would be solicited to enter into these societies. They would be discouraged by the fear of having a competition with other societies, either in the purchase, the sale, or the making up of the assortments. The number of these societies would soon be reduced; and trade, instead of extending, would constantly decline, and at last be entirely lost.

It would, therefore, be for the interest of these private societies, as we have before observed, to unite together; because then all their agents, both on the coasts of Coromandel, and on that of Malabar and in Bengal, being united and directed by one consistent system, would jointly labour in the several factories to collect proper assortments for the cargoes that were to be sent away from the chief factory, so that the whole should make a complete assortment when brought home, being collected upon an uniform plan, and proportioned according to the orders and instructions sent from Europe.

But it would be in vain to expect that any such union could take place without the assistance of government. In some cases men require to be encouraged; and it is chiefly, as in the present instance, when they are afraid of being denied that protection which they stand in need of, or apprehensive that favours may be granted to others which may be injurious to them. Government would find it their interest to encourage this association, as it is certainly the surest, if not the only, way to procure, at the most reasonable prices, the India goods that are wanted for home consumption, and for exportation. This truth will appear more striking from a very simple instance.

Let us suppose a merchant, who freights a ship for India

with a considerable stock. Will he commission several agents at the same place to buy the goods he wants? This cannot reasonably be supposed; because he will be sensible, that, each of them endeavouring to execute his orders with as much secrecy as possible, they would necessarily injure one another, and must consequently enhance the price of the goods; so that he would have a less quantity of the commodity for the same sum, than if he had employed but one agent. The application is easy; government is the merchant, and the company is the agent.

We have now proved only that in the India trade, the nature of things requires that the subjects of one country should unite into one company, both for their own interest and for that of the state; but nothing has yet appeared, from whence it can be inferred that this company must be an exclusive one. We imagine, on the contrary, that the exclusive privilege always granted to these companies depends on particular causes, which have no essential connection with this trade.

When the several nations in Europe began to find that it was their interest to take a part in the trade of India, which individuals refused to do, though none were excluded from it, they found themselves under the necessity of forming companies, and giving them every encouragement that so difficult an undertaking required. Capitals were advanced to them; they were invested with all the attributes of sovereign power; permitted to send ambassadors; and empowered to make peace and war; a fatal privilege, which, unfortunately for them and for mankind, they have too often exercised. It was found necessary at the same time to secure to them the means of indemnifying themselves for the expences of settlements, which must be very considerable. This gave rise to exclusive privileges, which at first were granted for a term of years; and afterwards made perpetual, from circumstances which we shall now explain.

The brilliant prerogatives granted to the companies, were, in fact, so many impediments to trade. The right of having fortresses, implied the necessity of building and defending them; that of having troops implied the obligation of paying and recruiting them. It was the same with regard to the permission of sending ambassadors, and concluding,

treaties with the Indian princes. All these privileges were attended with expences merely of parade, fit only to check the progress of trade, and to intoxicate the agents and factors sent by the companies into India, who on their arrival fancied themselves sovereigns, and acted accordingly.

Nations, however, found it very convenient to have some kind of settlements in Asia, which apparently were attended with no cost; and as it was reasonable, while the companies bore all the expences, that all the profits should be secured to them, the privileges have been continued. But if the several nations, instead of attending only to this pretended economy, which could be but temporary, had extended their views to futurity, and connected all the events which must naturally be brought about in the course of a number of years; they must have foreseen that the expences of sovereignty, which can never be ascertained, because they depend upon numberless political contingencies, would in time absorb both the profits and the stock of a trading company; that then the public treasury must be exhausted, to assist the chartered company; and that this assistance, being granted too late, could only remedy the mischiefs that had already happened, without removing the cause of them; so that the companies would never rise to any degree of importance.

But why should not states at length be undeceived? Why should they not take upon themselves a charge which probably belongs to them, and the burden of which, after having crushed the companies, must finally fall upon them? There would then be no further need of an exclusive privilege. The companies which subsist at present, and are of great importance on account of their old connections and established credit, would be supported with the greatest care. The appearance of monopoly would vanish for ever; and their freedom might enable them to pursue some new track, which they could not think of while they were encumbered with the charges annexed to the charter. On the other hand, commerce, being open to all the members of the community, would prosper and flourish by their industry, new discoveries would be attempted, and new enterprises formed. The trade, from one part of India to another, having the certainty of a market in Europe, would

become considerable and extensive. The companies, attentive to these improvements, would regulate their dealings by the success of private trade; and this emulation, which would not be injurious to any individual, would be beneficial to the several states.

We apprehend this system would tend to reconcile all interests, and would be consistent with all principles. It seems to be liable to no reasonable objection, either on the part of the advocates for the exclusive charter, or of those who contend for a free trade.

If the former should assert, that the companies, without the exclusive charter, would have but a precarious existence, and would soon be ruined by private traders; I should answer them, that they were not sincere, when they affirmed that private trade could never succeed. For, if it could possibly occasion the ruin of that of the companies, as they now pretend, it can only effect this by engrossing every branch of their trade against their will, by a superiority of powers, and by the ascendant of liberty. Besides, what is it that really constitutes our companies? It is their stock, their ships, their factories, or their exclusive charter. What is it that has always ruined them? Extravagant expences, abuses of every kind, visionary undertakings; in a word, bad administration, far more destructive than competition. But if the distribution of their powers be made with prudence and economy, if the spirit of property direct their operations, there is no obstacle which they cannot surmount, no success which they may not expect.

But would not this success give umbrage to the advocates for freedom? Would they not in their turn urge, that those rich and powerful companies would alarm private men, and in some measure destroy that general and absolute freedom, which is so necessary to trade?

We should not be surprised at this objection from them; for men, both in their actions and opinions, are more commonly guided by system than by facts. I do not except from this error the greatest part of our writers upon revenue. Commercial and civil liberty are the two tutelary deities of mankind, which we all reverence as well as they. But, that we may not be influenced by mere words, let us attend to the idea they are meant to convey. Let us ask those enthusiasts for liberty, what they would wish; when

ther they would have the laws entirely abolish those ancient companies, that every citizen might freely partake of this trade, and should equally have the same means of procuring the enjoyments of life, and the same resources to raise a fortune? But if such laws, with all their appearance of liberty, are in fact totally exclusive, let us not be induced by this false reasoning to adopt them. When the state allows all its members to carry on a trade that requires a large stock, and which consequently very few are able to undertake; I would ask, what advantage arises to the people in general from this regulation? It seems as if one meant to laugh at their credulity, in permitting them to undertake what they cannot execute. If the companies should be totally suppressed, there will be no India trade, or it will be only carried on by a few capital merchants.

I will go further still, and, waving the consideration of the exclusive charter, venture to affirm that the India companies, from the nature of their formation, have given opportunities to several people to become sharers in their trade, who would otherwise never have been concerned in it. Let us take a review of the number of persons, in all stations, and of all ages, that are proprietors, and partake of the profits of the trade, and it must be owned, that it would have been far more circumscribed if it had been in private hands; that the formation of companies has only diffused while it seemed to restrain it; and that the moderate price of the shares must be a powerful motive to the people, to wish for the preservation of an establishment, which opens to them a track from which they would for ever have been excluded by a free trade.

We believe, indeed, that both companies and private men might equally succeed without injuring one another, or creating any mutual jealousies. The companies might still pursue those great objects, which, by their nature and extent, can only be managed by a wealthy and powerful association. Private men, on the contrary, would confine themselves to such objects as are scarcely attended to by a great company, but might, by proper economy, and the combination of many small fortunes, become a source of riches to them.

Statefmen, who by their talents are called to the direction of public affairs, must determine this point, and rectify the

ideas of an obscure citizen, who may have been misled by his want of experience. The system of politics cannot too soon nor too deeply be applied to regulate a trade which so essentially concerns the fate of nations, and will probably always be an object of the greatest importance.

To put an end to all intercourse between Europe and India, that luxury, which has made such rapid progress in our part of the world, should be banished from every state. Our effeminacy should not create a thousand wants unknown to our forefathers. The rivalry of trade should no longer agitate the several nations who vie with each other in amassing riches. Such a revolution should take place in the manners, customs, and opinions of men, as is never likely to happen. Our actions should be regulated according to the principles of nature, which we seem to have abandoned for ever.

Such are the last reflections suggested to us with respect to the connections of Europe with Asia : let us now turn our thoughts to America.

BOOK VI.

DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. CONQUEST OF MEXICO ; AND
SETTLEMENTS OF THE SPANIARDS IN THAT PART OF
THE NEW WORLD.

Parallel of ancient and modern history.

ANCIENT history presents a magnificent scene to our view. The successive representation of great revolutions, heroic manners, and extraordinary events, will become more and more interesting, the more uncommon it is to meet with incidents that bear any resemblance to them. The period of founding and of subverting empires is past. The man before whom "the world was

silent," is no more. The several nations of the earth, after repeated shocks, after all the struggles between ambition and liberty, seem at length totally reconciled with the wretched tranquillity of servitude. Battles are now fought with cannon, for the purpose of taking a few towns, and of gratifying the caprices of a few powerful men: formerly they were fought with the sword, in order to overthrow and to establish kingdoms, or to avenge the natural rights of mankind. The history of the world is become insipid and trifling; and yet men are not become more happy. A regular and constant system of oppression has succeeded to the tumults and storms of conquest; and we behold, with a degree of indifference, the various ranks of slaves assassinating each other with their chains, for the amusement of their masters.

Europe, that part of the globe which has most influence over the rest, seems to have fixed itself on a solid and durable foundation. It is composed of communities that are almost equally powerful, enlightened, extensive, and jealous. They will encroach perpetually upon each other; and, in the midst of this continued fluctuation, some will be extended, others more limited, and the balance will alternately incline to different sides, without ever being entirely destroyed. The fanaticism of religion, and the spirit of conquest, those two disturbers of the universe, operate no longer as they have done. That sacred lever, whose extremity was attached to the earth, and whose centre of motion was in heaven, is now broken, or much weakened: and kings begin to discover, not for the happiness of their people, which concerns them little, but for their own private interest, that the object of the first importance is to obtain riches and security. Hence large armies are kept up, frontiers are fortified, and trade is encouraged.

A spirit of barter and exchange hath arisen in Europe, that seems to open a vast scene of speculation to individuals, but is only consistent with peace and tranquillity. A war, among commercial nations, is a conflagration that destroys them all. The time is not far off, when the sanction of government will extend to the private engagements between subjects of different nations; and when those bankruptcies, the effects of which are felt at immense distances, will become concerns of government. In these mercantile states,

the discovery of an island, the importation of a new commodity, the invention of some useful machine, the construction of a port, the establishment of a factory, the carrying off a branch of trade from a rival nation, will all become transactions of the utmost importance; and the annals of nations must hereafter be written by commercial philosophers, as they were formerly by historical orators.

The discovery of a new world was alone sufficient to furnish matter for our curiosity. A vast continent, entirely uncultivated, human nature reduced to the mere animal state, fields without harvests, treasures without proprietors, societies without policy, and men without manners, what an interesting and instructive spectacle would these have formed for a Locke, a Buffon, or a Montesquieu! What could have been so astonishing, so affecting, as an account of their voyage! But the image of rude unpolished nature is already disfigured. We shall endeavour to collect the features of it, though now half effaced, as soon as we have described, and delivered up to the execration of posterity, those rapacious and cruel christians, whom chance unfortunately conducted to this other hemisphere.

Ancient revolutions of Spain. SPAIN, which was known in the earliest ages under the names of Hesperia and

Iberia, was inhabited by people, who, defended on one side by the sea, and on the other by the Pyrenees, enjoyed in peace an agreeable climate and a fruitful country, and who governed themselves according to their own customs. The southern part of this nation had in some degree emerged from its state of barbarism, by some trifling connections it had formed with foreigners; but the inhabitants on the coasts of the ocean resembled all those nations which know no other occupation but that of the chase. They were so much attached to this kind of life, that they left the toils of agriculture to their wives; the fatigues of which they had encouraged them to support by establishing general assemblies annually, in which those women, who had most distinguished themselves in the labours of agriculture, received public applause.

Here we have an instance of the weaker sex being employed in the most laborious occupations of life, either savage or civilized; the young girl, holding in her delicate

hands the instruments of husbandry; and her mother, perhaps with child of a second or third infant, bending her body over the plough, and thrusting the plough-share or the spade into the bosom of the earth during the most excessive heats. If I am not deceived, this phenomenon will appear to a man who reflects, one of the most astonishing that occurs in the singular annals of our species. It would be difficult to find a more striking example of what respect for national customs can effect; for there is less heroism in exposing one's life, than devoting it to constant fatigue. But if such be the power of men collected together over the minds of women, how much greater would that of women, in a collective body, be over the hearts of men?

Such was the situation of Spain, when the Carthaginians turned their rapacious views upon a country filled with riches, which were unknown to its inhabitants. These merchants, whose ships covered the Mediterranean, introduced themselves as friends, who came to barter several articles of convenience against metals that were thought to be useless. The temptations of a trade so advantageous in appearance, seduced the Spaniards so powerfully, that they permitted these republicans to build upon their coasts houses for their occasional residence, magazines for the security of their merchandize, and temples for the exercise of their religion. These establishments insensibly became fortified places, of which this power, whose policy was superior to its military skill, availed itself to enslave a credulous people, who were always divided among themselves, and always irreconcilable in their enmities. By bribing some, and intimidating others, Carthage succeeded in subduing Spain, and even effected this with Spanish soldiers and Spanish wealth.

When the Carthaginians were become masters of the most extensive and most valuable part of this fine country, they seemed either to be ignorant of the means of establishing their dominion there, or to neglect them. Instead of continuing to appropriate to themselves the gold and silver, with which the conquered nations were abundantly supplied from their mines, by exchanging commodities of little value for those metals, they chose to seize them by force. Nor was this spirit of tyranny confined to the body of the republic; it also influenced the generals, the officers, the private men, and even the merchants. The violence of

these proceedings threw the conquered provinces into a state of despair, and excited in those which were yet free an extreme aversion for so intolerable a yoke. In this situation they all of them resolved to accept of assistance, as fatal to them as their misfortunes were oppressive. Spain became a theatre of jealousy, ambition, and hatred, between Rome and Carthage.

The two commonwealths contended with great obstinacy for the empire of this beautiful part of Europe; and, perhaps, it would finally have belonged to neither of them, if the Spaniards had continued quiet spectators of the contest, and left the rival nations time to destroy each other. But they chose to become actors in the bloody scene, and thus reduced themselves to be slaves to the Romans; in which state they remained till the fifth century.

In a short time the degeneracy of those masters of the world, inspired the savage nations of the north with the enterprising idea of invading the provinces that were ill governed and ill defended. The Suevi, the Alani, the Vandals, and the Goths, passed the Pyrenean mountains. These barbarians, being robbers by profession, were incapable of becoming citizens, and made war upon each other. The Goths, superior in abilities or good fortune, subdued the rest, and reduced all the kingdoms of Spain into one; which, notwithstanding the defects in its constitution, and the unbounded extortions of the Jews, who were the only merchants, supported itself till the commencement of the eighth century.

At this period, the Moors, who had subdued Africa with that impetuosity which was the characteristic of all their enterprises, crossed the sea. They found in Spain a king destitute of virtue and abilities; a multitude of courtiers, and no statesmen; soldiers devoid of courage, and generals without experience; an effeminate people, holding the government in contempt, and disposed to change their master; and they also found rebels, who joined them for the sake of plundering, burning, and massacring all that opposed them. In less than three years, the sovereignty of the Christians was destroyed, and that of the infidels established upon a solid foundation.

Spain was indebted to its conquerors for the first principles of taste, humanity, politeness, and philosophy; as also

for introducing into the country several arts, and a considerable trade. These brilliant prospects were not of long duration. They were soon dissipated by the numberless sects that arose among the conquerors, and the irreparable fault they committed in establishing distinct sovereigns in all the principal towns of their dominions.

During this time, the Goths, who, to screen themselves from the power of the mohammedans, had sought an asylum in the extremity of the Asturias, were labouring under the yoke of anarchy, plunged in a barbarous state of ignorance, oppressed by their fanatical priests, languishing under inexpressible poverty, and perpetually harassed by civil wars. Under the influence of these calamities, far from thinking to avail themselves of the divisions subsisting among their enemies, they were sufficiently happy in being forgotten, or in not being known by them. But as soon as the crown, which was originally elective, became hereditary in the tenth century ; as soon as the nobility and bishops became incapable of disturbing the state ; and that the people, raised from slavery, were admitted to a share of the government ; the national spirit began to revive. The Arabians, attacked on every side, were successively stripped of their conquests ; and at the end of the fifteenth century they had but one little kingdom remaining.

Their fall would have been more rapid, had they engaged with a power that could have united, in one common centre, the conquests it gained over them. But the revolution was not affected in this manner. The mohammedans were attacked by different chiefs, each of which was at the head of a distinct state. Spain was divided into as many kingdoms as it contained provinces : and it was not till after a long time, several successions, wars, and revolutions, that these small states were at last united in the two monarchies of Castile and Arragon. At length, the marriage of Isabella with Ferdinand having happily joined all the crowns of Spain into one family, they found themselves equal to the enterprize of attacking the kingdom of Granada.

This state, which scarcely occupied one eighth part of the peninsula of Spain, had always been in a flourishing condition from the time of the invasion of the Saracens ; but its prosperity had increased in proportion as the successes of the

christians had induced a greater number of infidels to take refuge there. It consisted of three millions of inhabitants. Throughout the rest of Europe there were no lands so well cultivated; manufactures so numerous and improved; so regular and so extensive a navigation. The public revenues amounted to seven millions of livres [291,666l. 13s. 4d.] a prodigious sum at a time when gold and silver were very scarce.

These several advantages, far from deterring the monarchs of Castile and Arragon from invading Granada, were the motives that principally urged them to the enterprise. They were obliged to carry on a ten years bloody war, in order to subdue this flourishing province. The conquest of it was completed by the surrender of the capital in the beginning of January 1492.

Columbus forms the design of discovering America. It was in these glorious circumstances, that Christopher Columbus, a man of obscure birth, whose knowledge of astronomy and navigation was far superior to that of his cotemporaries, proposed to the

Spaniards, who were happy at home, to aggrandize themselves abroad. He was led by a secret impulse to imagine that another continent certainly existed, and that he was the person destined to discover it. The idea of antipodes, which superstition had condemned as heretical and impious, and reason itself had treated as chimerical, appeared to this penetrating genius to have its foundation in truth. This idea, perhaps the greatest that ever entered into the human mind, took strong possession of his imagination; and, having in vain proposed the acquisition of a new hemisphere to his native country Genoa, to Portugal, where he then resided, and even to England, which he might have expected would readily have concurred in any maritime enterprise, he at last communicated his views and his projects to Isabella.

The ministers of this princess, who looked upon the scheme of discovering a new world as the offspring of a distempered brain, treated the author of it for some time with those airs of contemptuous insolence which men in office often put on with those who have nothing but genius to recommend them. But Columbus was not to be discour-

aged by any difficulties ; he possessed, as all men do who engage in extraordinary enterprises, a degree of enthusiasm, which renders them superior to the cavils of the ignorant, the contempt of the proud, the mean arts of the covetous, and the delays of the indolent. At length, by perseverance, spirit, and courage, joined to the arts of prudence and management, he surmounted every obstacle. Having obtained three small vessels, and ninety men, he set sail on the third of August 1492, with the title of admiral and viceroy of the islands and territories he should discover, and arrived at the Canaries, where it was his intention to cast anchor.

THESE islands, situated at the distance *Columbus sails* of five hundred miles from the coasts of *first towards* Spain, and of a hundred miles from the *the Canaries.* continent of Africa, are seven in number.

They were known to the ancients by the name of the Fortunate islands. It was at the most western part of this small archipelago that the celebrated Ptolemy, who lived in the second century of the christian era, established a first meridian ; from whence he computed the longitudes of all the places, the geographical position of which he determined. According to the judicious remark of three French astronomers, who have published so curious and so instructive an account of a voyage in 1771 and 1772, he might have chosen Alexandria for this purpose : but he was apprehensive, without doubt, that this predilection for his country might be imitated by others, and that some confusion might arise from these variations. The plan which this philosopher adopted, of taking for his first meridian that which appeared to leave to the east of it all the part of the world then known, was generally approved, and followed for several centuries. It is only in modern times, that several nations have improperly substituted to this meridian, that of the capital of their own empire.

The habit that had been contracted of repeating the name of the Fortunate islands, did not prevent them from being totally neglected. Some navigators had certainly reconnoitred anew these pagan territories, since, in 1344, the court of Rome gave the property of them to Louis de la Cerda, one of the Infants of Castile. Obstinately thwarted by the

head of his family, this prince had never yet been able to avail himself of this extraordinary liberality, when Bethencourt went from Rochelle, on the 6th of May 1402, and two months after seized upon Lancerota. It being impossible for him to proceed any farther with the forces he had remaining; this adventurer determined to pay homage to the king of Castile of all the conquests he should make. With the succours furnished him by this monarch, he seized upon Fuerteventura in 1404, upon Gomera in 1405, and upon the isle of Ferro in 1406. Canary, Palma, and Teneriffe, did not submit till 1483, 1492, and 1496. This archipelago, by the name of the Canary islands, has ever since made part of the Spanish dominions, and has been governed by the laws of Castile.

The Canaries enjoy the advantage of a sky that is generally serene. The heat is great on the coasts; but the air is agreeably temperate upon the places that are a little higher; and too cold upon some of the mountains that are covered with snow the greatest part of the year.

All, or nearly all, the fruits and animals of the Old and of the New World thrive upon the different kinds of soil in these islands. They furnish oils, some silk, a great deal of perella*, and a considerable quantity of sugar, inferior to that which comes from America. The corn they supply is most commonly sufficient for the consumption of the country; and without mentioning liquors of an inferior kind, their exports in wine amount annually to ten or twelve thousand pipes of malmsey.

In 1768, the Canaries reckoned one hundred and fifty-five thousand one hundred and sixty-six inhabitants, exclusive of five hundred and eight clergy, nine hundred and twenty-two monks, and seven hundred and forty-six nuns. Twenty-nine thousand eight hundred of these inhabitants were embodied into a regiment. These militia were nothing at that period; but they have since been a little disciplined, as well as all the troops in the other Spanish colonies.

Although the audience, or superior tribunal of justice, be in the island particularly called Canary, yet the island of Teneriffe, which is known by its volcanos, and by a moun-

* A fungous substance from which a red dye is extracted.

tain which, according to the latest and best observations, rises one thousand nine hundred and four toises above the level of the sea, is considered as the capital of the archipelago. It is the most extensive, the richest, and the most populous. It is the residence of the governor-general, and the seat of administration. The traders, who are almost all English or Americans, make their purchases in its harbour of Sainte Croix, and take in their cargoes there.

The money which these merchants bring to the islands, seldom circulates in them. It is not carried off by the imports, since they consist only in the monopoly of tobacco, and a tax of six per cent. on all exports and imports: inconsiderable resources, which must be absorbed by the expences of sovereignty. If the Canaries send annually fifteen or sixteen hundred thousand livres [from 62,500l. to 66,666l. 13s. 4d.] to the mother-country, it is for the superstition of the crusades: it is for one half of the first year's salaries paid to the crown, by those who have obtained any post under government: it is for the *droit des lances*, substituted throughout the whole empire, to the obligation formerly imposed upon all titled persons, of following the king to war: it is for one third of the revenue of the bishoprics, which, in whatever part of the world they may be, belongs to the government: it is for the produce of the lands acquired or preserved by some families residing in Spain: in a word, it is to defray the expences of those, who, by a restless disposition, ambition, or the desire of acquiring knowledge, are prompted to quit the archipelago.

So considerable an exportation of specie has kept the Canaries constantly exhausted. They would have emerged from this situation, had they been suffered peaceably to enjoy the liberty which, in 1657, was granted them, of fitting out every year for the other hemisphere, five ships laden with a thousand tons of provisions or merchandize. Unfortunately, the restraints put upon this trade at Cadiz, gradually reduced it to the sending of one very small vessel to Caracca. This tyranny is drawing to an end; and we shall speak of its decline, after we have accompanied Columbus to the great scene upon which his genius and courage are going to be displayed.

On the sixth of September, the admiral quitted Gomera, where his too feeble vessels had been repaired, and his pro-

visions renewed : he then abandoned the track pursued by preceding navigators ; and directed his course westward, in order to get into an unknown ocean. .

In a little time, the ships crews, terrified at the idea of the immense tract of sea that separated them from their native country, began to express their fears. They murmured, and the most violent of the mutineers proposed several times that they should throw the author of their danger overboard. His most zealous adherents were even without hope ; and he had now nothing to expect either from severity or mildness. The admiral then spake to them in the following terms : “ If the land does not appear in three “ days time, I give myself up to your resentment.” The speech was bold, but not rash.

For some time past, on sounding, he had found a bottom, and from other circumstances, which are seldom deceitful, he had reason to conclude that he was not far from the object of his pursuit.

Arrival of Co- THE New World was discovered in the
lumbus in the month of October. Columbus landed on
New World. one of the Lucayas, or Bahama islands,
 which he called San-Salvador, and took
possession of it in the name of Isabella. No European at
that time imagined that there could be any injustice in
seizing upon a country which was not inhabited by Chris-
tians.

The islanders, on seeing the ships, and a race of men so different from themselves, were terrified, and ran away. The Spaniards caught some of them, treated them with great civility, and dismissed them loaded with presents.

This behaviour entirely dissipated the fears of the whole nation : the inhabitants appeared upon the shore without arms. Several of them came on-board. They viewed every thing with admiration. Their manners were free and open. They brought fruits. They assisted the Spaniards in getting on shore, by taking them upon their shoulders. The inhabitants of the neighbouring islands shewed the same obliging disposition. The sailors, sent by Columbus to make discoveries, everywhere met with the kindest reception. Men, women, and children, were employed in pro-

curing provisions for them. They filled the hammocks where they slept with the finest cotton.

Tell me, reader, whether these were civilized people landing among savages, or savages among civilized people? Of what consequence was it that they were naked; that they dwelt in the midst of the forests, and lived under huts; that there was neither a code of laws among them, nor civil or criminal justice, provided they were mild, humane, beneficent, and possessed all the virtues that distinguish the human species? Alas! people with the same behaviour would have met with the same reception everywhere. Let us forget, if it be possible, the instant of this discovery, this first interview between two worlds, or rather let us recal it to our memory, only to increase our detestation of the one we inhabit.

But it was gold the Spaniards wanted, and they soon found it. Several of the savages wore ornaments made of this precious metal, which they presented to their new guests; who on their part were more disgusted with the naked appearance and simplicity of these people, than touched with their kindness. They were incapable of discerning in them the genuine characters of nature. Surprised to find men of a copper colour without beards or hair on their bodies, they looked upon them as a race of imperfect animals, who were only to be treated with humanity, till the necessary information was obtained in regard to the neighbouring countries, and the seat of the gold mines.

HAVING taken a view of several smaller islands, Columbus landed on the north side of a large one called by the natives Hayti; to which he gave the name of Hispaniola, and which is now called San Domingo; he was conducted thither by some savages of the other islands, who accompanied him without the least distrust, and gave him to understand, that it was the great island which furnished them with the metal the Spaniards were so eager to acquire.

The island of Hayti, which is two hundred leagues in length, and sixty, and in some places eighty, in breadth, is divided from east to west by a chain of mountains, which occupy the centre of the island, and are for the most part

The Spaniards make their first settlement in America at St. Domingo.

sleep. It was distributed into five populous kingdoms, the inhabitants of which lived in perfect amity. Their kings, who were called caciques, were so much the more absolute, as they were much beloved. The complexion of these people was much fairer than that of those in the other islands. They painted their bodies. The men went quite naked. The women wore a kind of cotton petticoat, which reached no further than their knees. The girls, as well as the men, were naked. Their food was maize, roots, fruit, and shell fish. As they were temperate, nimble, and active, but not strong, they were averse from labour. They lived free from care in a state of agreeable indolence. Their time was spent in dancing, diversion, and sleep. By the accounts the Spaniards give of them, they shewed little marks of understanding; and indeed islanders, who live in a state of separation from the rest of mankind, must of necessity have very confined ideas. Detached societies arrive at improvement by slow and difficult advances. They derive no advantages from those discoveries, which time and experience throw in the way of other people: neither do the chances of acquiring knowledge occur so frequently among them.

The Spaniards themselves confess that these people were humane, void of malice and revenge, and almost divested of any passion whatever. They were ignorant, but shewed no desire of being informed. This indifference, and the confidence they reposed in strangers, prove that they were happy. Their history, and their notions of morality, were contained in a collection of songs, which they learnt from their infancy; and they had, in common with all nations, some fables concerning the origin of the human race.

We know little of their religion, to which they were not much attached; and it is probable that in this respect, as well as in many others, they have been calumniated by the authors of their destruction, who pretend that these islanders, whose manners were so gentle, paid adoration to a number of malevolent beings. The worshippers of a malevolent deity can never be good themselves. But of what consequence were their deities or their mode of worship? Did they question the strangers upon the subject of their religion? Or, was their belief a motive of curiosity, hatred, or contempt for them? They were the Europeans, who conducted themselves as if they had been advised by the

demon of the islanders; and the islanders behaved as if they had obeyed the Deity of the Europeans.

They had no law that limited the number of their wives. It was common for one of them to have some privileges, and distinctions allotted to her; but these gave her no authority over the rest. She was the one whom the husband loved the best, and by whom he thought himself best beloved. On the death of her husband, she sometimes caused herself to be buried in the same grave with him. This was not a custom, a duty, or a point of honour, among these people; but the wife found it impossible to survive the object of her tenderest affection. This freedom in love and marriage, which was authorised by their laws and manners, was by the Spaniards called debauchery, licentiousness, and vice: and to the pretended excessive indulgence of the islanders in this particular, they attributed the origin of a disgraceful and destructive disease, which is generally thought to have been unknown in Europe before the discovery of America.

These islanders had no other weapon than a bow and arrows made of wood, the point of which being hardened in the fire was sometimes armed with sharp stones, or the bone of a fish. The ordinary dress of the Spaniards was of itself an impenetrable armour against arrows of this kind, shot with little dexterity. These weapons and some small clubs, or rather large sticks, which could seldom give a mortal blow were far from making these people formidable.

They were distinguished into different classes, one of which had a claim to a kind of nobility; but we are little acquainted either with the prerogatives annexed to this distinction, or with the means of obtaining it. This ignorant and savage people had also forcerers among them, who have always been either the offspring or parents of superstition.

Columbus omitted no attention that might engage the friendship of these islanders. But at the same time he made them sensible, that though he had no inclination to hurt them, he did not want the power. The proofs he gave in their presence of the surprising effects of his artillery, convinced them of the truth of what he said. They looked upon the Spaniards as men descended from heaven; and the

presents they received, were in their estimation, not mere curiosities, but sacred things. This error was productive of great advantages; nor was it removed by any act of folly or cruelty. They gave the savages red caps, glass beads, pins, knives, and bells, and received in return gold and provisions.

Columbus availed himself of this harmony to fix upon a place for a settlement, which he designed should be the centre of all his future projects. He erected a fort with the assistance of the islanders, who cheerfully laboured to forge chains for themselves. He left thirty-nine Castilians in the place; and having reconnoitered the greatest part of the island, set sail for Spain.

He arrived at Palos, a port of Andalusia, from whence he had sailed seven months before. He proceeded by land to Barcelona, where the court resided. This journey was a triumph. The nobility and the people went to meet him, and followed him in crowds to the presence of Ferdinand and Isabella. He presented to them some islanders, who had voluntarily accompanied him. He produced pieces of gold, birds, cotton, and many curiosities, which were valuable on account of their novelty. Such a variety of uncommon objects, exposed to the view of a people whose vanity inflamed by imagination magnified every thing, made them fancy that they saw an inexhaustible source of riches for ever flowing into their country. The enthusiasm spread, and reached even to the throne. At the public audience the sovereigns gave to Columbus, he was permitted to be covered, and to sit as a grandee of Spain. He related his voyage to them. They loaded him with caresses, commendations, and honours; and soon after he re embarked with seventeen sail, to make new discoveries, and to establish colonies.

On his arrival at San Domingo with fifteen hundred men, soldiers, artificers, and missionaries; with provisions for their subsistence; with the seeds of all the plants that were thought likely to thrive in this hot and damp climate; and with the domestic animals of the old hemisphere, of which there was not one in the new one, Columbus found nothing but ruins and carcases upon the spot where he had left fortifications and Spaniards. These plunderers had occasioned their own destruction by their haughty, licentious, and ty-

rannical, behaviour; and he had the address to persuade those who had less moderation than himself, that it was good policy to postpone their revenge to another time. A fort, honoured with the name of Isabella, was constructed on the borders of the ocean; and that of Saint Thomas was erected on the mountains of Cibao, where the islanders gathered from the torrents the greatest part of the gold they used for their ornaments, and where the conquerors intended to open mines.

While these works were carrying on, the provisions that had been brought from Europe had been either consumed or were spoiled. The colony had not received fresh ones enough to supply the deficiency; and soldiers, or sailors, had neither had any leisure, knowledge, or inclination enough to produce fresh articles of subsistence. It became necessary to have recourse to the natives of the country, who cultivated but little, were unable to subsist strangers, who, though they were the most moderate persons of the old hemisphere, yet consumed each of them as much as would have been sufficient for several Indians. These unfortunate people gave up all they had, and still more was required. These continual exactions produced an alteration in their character, which was naturally timid; and all the caciques, except Guacanahari, who had first received the Spaniards in his dominions, resolved to unite their forces, in order to break a yoke which was becoming every day more intolerable.

COLUMBUS desisted from pursuing his discoveries, in order to prevent, or put a stop to this unexpected danger. Although two-thirds of his followers had been hurried to the grave by misery, by the climate, and by debauchery; although sickness prevented many of those who had escaped these terrible scourges from joining him; and although he could not muster more than two hundred infantry and twenty horse to face the enemy, yet this extraordinary man was not afraid of attacking, in 1495, in the plains of Vega-Real, an army, which historians in general have computed at one hundred thousand men. The chief precaution taken was to fall upon these troops in the night-time.

Cruelties committed by the conquerors at San Domingo.

The unhappy islanders were conquered before the action began. They considered the Spaniards as beings of a superior order. Their admiration, respect, and fear, were increased by the European armour; and the sight of the cavalry in particular astonished them beyond measure. Many of them were simple enough to believe that the man and the horse were the same animal, or a kind of deity. Had their courage even been proof against these impressions of terror, they could have made but a faint resistance. The cannonading, the pikes, and a discipline to which they were strangers, must have easily dispersed them. They fled on all sides. To punish them for their rebellion, as it was called, every Indian above fourteen years of age was subjected to a tribute in gold or in cotton, according to the district he lived in.

This arrangement of matters, which required assiduous labour, appeared the greatest of evils to a people who were not used to be employed. The desire of getting rid of their oppressors, became their only passion. As they entertained no further hope of their being able to send them away by force, the idea occurred to them, in 1496, of expelling them by famine. In this view, they sowed no more maize, they pulled up the cassava roots that were already planted, and they themselves took refuge among the most barren and steep rocks.

Desperate resolutions are seldom attended with success; accordingly, that which the Indians had taken proved extremely fatal to them. The gifts of rude and uncultivated nature were not sufficient for their support, as they had inconsiderately expected they would be; and their asylum, however difficult of access, was not able to screen them from the pursuits of their incensed tyrants, who, during this total privation of local resources, accidentally received some provisions from the mother-country. Their rage was carried to such a height, that they trained up dogs to hunt and devour these unhappy men; and it has even been said, that some of the Castilians had made a vow to massacre twelve Indians every day in honour of the twelve apostles. Before this event, the island was reckoned to contain a million of inhabitants. A third part of this considerable population perished on this occasion, by fatigue, hunger, and the sword.

Scarce had the remains of these unfortunate people, who had escaped so many disasters, returned to their habitations, where calamities of another kind were preparing for them, than divisions arose among their persecutors. The removal of the capital of the colony from the north to the south, from Isabella to San Domingo, might possibly furnish a pretence for some complaints: but the dissensions had their chief origin in the passions raised to an uncommon degree of fermentation under a burning sky, and not sufficiently restrained by an authority not properly established. When the business was to dethrone some cacique, to plunder some district, or to exterminate some village, the commands of Columbus's brother, or of his representative, were readily obeyed. After the sharing of the booty, the spirit of independence became again the prevailing spirit: and their mutual jealousies and animosities were only attended to. The parties at length took up arms against each other, and war was openly declared.

During the course of these divisions, the admiral was in Spain, where he had returned in order to answer the accusations that were incessantly renewed against him. The recital of all the great actions he had performed, and the execution of all the useful things he meant to carry into execution, easily regained him the confidence of Isabella. Ferdinand himself began to be a little reconciled to the idea of distant voyages. The plan of a regular form of government was traced, which was first to be tried at San Domingo, and afterwards adopted, with such alterations as experience should have shewn to be necessary, in the several settlements, which in process of time might be founded in the other hemisphere. Men, skilled in the working of the mines, were carefully selected; and the government took upon itself to pay and to maintain them for several years.

The people thought differently from their sovereigns. Time, which brings on reflection when the first transports of enthusiasm are passed, had extinguished the desire originally so ardent, of going to the New World. Its gold was no longer an object of temptation: on the contrary, the livid complexions of all those who returned home; the severe and disgraceful distempers with which most of them were afflicted; the accounts of the unwholesomeness of the climate, of the numbers who had lost their lives, and the

hardships they had undergone from the scarcity of provisions ; an unwillingness to be under the command of a foreigner, the severity of whose discipline was generally censured ; and, perhaps, the jealousy that was entertained of his growing reputation ; all these reasons contributed to produce an insuperable prejudice against San Domingo in the subjects of the crown of Castile, the only Spaniards who, till the year 1593, were allowed to embark for that island.

It was absolutely necessary, however, to procure colonists ; the admiral therefore proposed to have recourse to the prisons, and to rescue criminals from death and infamy, for the purpose of aggrandizing their country, of which they were the refuse and the disgrace. This project would have been attended with fewer inconveniencies in such colonies as, having gained a more solid establishment, might, by the force of their laws, have restrained or corrected licentious and profligate individuals ; but infant states require founders of a different character from a set of rogues. America will, perhaps, never get rid of the remains of that alloy which debased the first colonies that were transported thither from Europe ; and Columbus himself was soon convinced of the injudicious advice he had given.

Had this enterprising seaman carried out with him men of the common stamp, he might, during the voyage, have inspired them with honest principles at least, if not with high notions of honour. These persons on their arrival would have constituted a majority, and, by setting the example of obedience, would necessarily have brought back to order those who had deviated from it. Such a harmony would have been productive of the most salutary effects, and have established the colony on the most solid foundation. The Indians would have been treated in a better manner, the mines worked to greater advantage, and the taxes more easily levied. The mother-country, animated by this success to greater exertions, might have formed new settlements, which would have augmented the glory, the wealth, and the power, of Spain. These important events, which might have been brought forward in a few years, were rendered abortive by this hasty idea.

The malefactors who accompanied Columbus, in conjunction with the plunderers that infested San Domingo,

formed one of the most unnatural kinds of society that had ever appeared upon the globe. Their mutual coalition enabled them boldly to set all authority at defiance ; and the impossibility of subduing them, made it necessary to have recourse to attempts to bring them over. Several were tried in vain. At length, in 1499, it was suggested, that to the lands which every Spaniard received, a greater or less number of islanders should be annexed, whose time and labour were to be devoted to masters destitute of humanity and prudence. This act of weakness restored apparent tranquillity to the colony, but without conciliating to the admiral the affection of those who profited by it. The complaints made against him were even more constant, more urgent, more general, and more attended to than they had been before.

This extraordinary man purchased upon very hard terms the fame which his genius and industry had procured him. His life exhibited a perpetual contrast of elevation and depression. He was not only continually exposed to the calbals, calumnies, and ingratitude of individuals ; but was also obliged to submit to the caprices of a haughty and turbulent court, which by turns rewarded or punished, reduced him to the necessity of making the most humiliating justifications, and restored him to its confidence.

The prejudice, entertained by the Spanish ministry against the author of the greatest discovery ever made, operated so far, that an arbitrator was sent to the New World, to decide between Columbus and his soldiers. Bovadilla, the most ambitious, self-interested, unjust, and violent, man that had yet gone over to America, arrived at San Domingo in 1500 ; deprived the admiral of his property, his honours, and his command, and sent him to Europe in irons. The sovereigns were warned, by public indignation, that the world expected the immediate punishment of so daring a crime, and the reparation of so great an outrage. In order to conciliate propriety with their prejudices, Ferdinand and Isabella recalled, with real or feigned resentment, the agent who had so cruelly abused the power with which they had intrusted him : but they did not restore to his post the deplorable victim of his incomprehensible villany. Columbus, rather than languish in indolence, or live in a state of humiliation, determined to undertake a fourth voyage as an ad-

venturer, into regions which might almost be said to have been created by himself. After this effort, which neither the malice of mankind, nor the caprice of the elements, rendered useless, he ended in 1506, at Valladolid, his brilliant career, which the recent death of Isabella had deprived him of every hope of its ever being fortunate. Although he was no more than fifty-nine years of age, yet his bodily strength was much weakened: but the faculties of his mind had not lost any of their energy.

Such was the end of this uncommon man, who, to the astonishment of Europe, added a fourth part to the earth, or rather half a world to this globe, which had been so long desolate, and so little known. It might reasonably have been expected, that public gratitude would have given the name of this intrepid seaman to the new hemisphere, the first discovery of which was owing to his enterprising genius. This was the least homage of respect that could be paid to his memory; but either through envy, inattention, or the caprice of fortune even in the distribution of fame, this honour was reserved for Americus Vespucius, a Florentine, who did nothing more than follow the footsteps of a man whose name ought to stand foremost in the list of great characters. Thus the very era, which added America to the known world, was distinguished by an instance of injustice, that may be considered as a fatal prelude to those scenes of violence of which this unhappy country was afterwards to be the theatre.

His misfortunes had commenced with the discovery. Columbus, notwithstanding his humanity and his talents, increased them himself by fixing Americans upon the lands which he distributed to his soldiers. This plan, which he had pursued merely to remove the embarrassments to which he was exposed from an almost incessant spirit of rebellion, was continued and extended by Bovadilla, in the view of gaining the affections of the Spaniards. Ovando, who succeeded him, broke all these connections, as he had been ordered to do. Rest was the first enjoyment of these feeble beings, who had been condemned by force to labours, which were neither consistent with the nature of their food, with their constitution, nor with their customs. They then wandered about as chance directed their steps, or sat themselves down and did nothing. The consequence of this in-

dolence was a famine, which was fatal both to them and their oppressors. It might have been possible to bring about some fortunate alteration in circumstances with mildness, prudent regulations, and a great share of patience. But these slow and moderate measures were not suitable to conquerors, who were eager to acquire, and earnest to enjoy. They demanded, with a degree of warmth inseparable from a concern of importance, that all the Indians should be distributed among them, in order to be employed in working of the mines, in the cultivation of corn, or in any other kind of labour of which they might be thought capable. Religion and political views were the two pretences made use of to palliate this dreadful system. It was urged, that so long as these savages were tolerated in their superstitions, they would never embrace Christianity; and would always be in a disposition to revolt, unless their dispersion should put it out of their power to make any attempt. The court, after several discussions, resolved to adopt an arrangement, so contrary to every sound principle. The whole island was divided into a greater number of districts; which the Spaniards obtained of greater or less extent, in proportion to their rank, interest, or birth. The Indians attached to these precarious possessions, were slaves, whom the law was always bound to protect, though it never did it effectually either at San Domingo, or in the other parts of this new world, where this horrid plan has since been generally established.

Some commotions were the immediate consequence of this arrangement: but they were put a stop to by treachery or by the effusion of blood. When slavery was completely established, the produce of the mines became more certain. At first one half belonged to the crown. This claim was afterwards reduced to one third, and at length limited to a fifth part.

The treasures brought from San Domingo excited the avarice even of those who would not venture to cross the seas. The grandees, the favourites, and those who had employments in the state, obtained some of this property, which procured them riches without care, without disbursements, and without anxiety. They committed the care of them to agents who were to make their own fortunes, while they increased those of their principals. In less than

six years time, sixty thousand American families were reduced to fourteen thousand ; and the continent and the adjacent islands were ransacked for savages to supply their place.

They were indiscriminately chained together like beasts. Those who sank under their burdens were compelled to rise by severe blows. No intercourse passed between the sexes except by stealth. The men perished in the mines ; and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their constitutions, already exhausted with excessive labour, were still further impaired by an unwholesome and scanty diet. The mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, pressing their dead or dying infants to their breasts, shrivelled and contracted for want of a proper supply of milk. The fathers either poisoned themselves, or hanged themselves on those very trees on which they had just before seen their wives or their children expire. The whole race became extinct. Let me be allowed to pause here for a moment. My eyes overflow with tears, and I can no longer discern what I am writing.

Voyages which led the Spaniards to the knowledge of Mexico.

BEFORE these scenes of horror had completed the ruin of the first countries discovered by the Spaniards in the New World, some adventurers of that nation had formed settlements of less importance at Jamaica, at Porto Rico, and at Cuba.

Velasquez, who founded the last of these, was desirous that his colony should share with that of San Domingo the advantage of making discoveries on the continent ; and he found most of the persons, whom an active and insatiable avidity had led into his island, very well disposed to second his views. A hundred and ten persons embarked, on the eighth of February 1517, on board three small vessels at Saint Jago ; sailed westward, and landed successively at Yucatan, and at Campeachy. They were received as enemies upon both these coasts ; many of them perished in the contests they were engaged in, and the rest regained, in the utmost confusion, the port from whence they had set out a few months before with such flattering expectations. Their return was marked by the death of Cordova, the commander of the expedition, who expired of his wounds.

Till this period, the new hemisphere had presented nothing to the Spaniards but naked and wandering savages, without any occupation or form of government. This was the first time they had seen a people dwelling in houses, clothed, formed into a national body, and sufficiently advanced in the arts to convert precious metals into vases.

This discovery, while it excited apprehensions of new dangers, presented, at the same time, the alluring prospect of a rich booty; two hundred and forty Spaniards therefore went on-board four ships fitted out by the chief of the colony at his own expence. They began by verifying the reports brought by the preceding adventurers; they then continued their voyage as far as the river Paduco, and thought they perceived in all parts still more evident marks of civilization. They often landed. Sometimes they were very warmly attacked, and sometimes they were received with a degree of respect bordering upon adoration. They found one or two opportunities of exchanging some trifles of the old hemisphere for the gold of the new one. The most enterprising of them were of opinion that a settlement should be formed upon these beautiful regions; but their commander Gryalva, though active and intrepid, was not animated with the soul of a hero, and did not think his forces sufficient for so important an undertaking. He returned to Cuba, where he gave an account, more or less exaggerated, of all he had seen, and of all he had been able to learn, concerning the empire of Mexico.

The conquest of this immense and opulent region was immediately resolved upon by Velasquez; but he took some time in deliberating upon the choice of the agent he meant to employ on this occasion. He was apprehensive of intrusting the business to a man who should not have the qualities necessary to insure its success, or to one who should have too much ambition to give the honour of it to him. His confidants at length determined his choice in favour of Fernando Cortez, the one of his lieutenants whom his talents most strongly indicated as the fittest person to execute the project, but at the same time the most improper to answer his personal views. The activity, elevation of mind, and boldness displayed by the new commander in preparing for an expedition, the difficulties of which he foresees and wishes to remove, awaken all the anxiety of a governor na-

naturally too suspicious. He was observed to be employed, first in private, and afterwards openly, in suggesting a plan for the withdrawing of an important commission, which he reproached himself with having inconsiderately given. But this regret was too late. Before the arrangements, contrived to keep back the fleet, composed of eleven small vessels, could be settled, it had set sail on the tenth February 1519, with nine hundred sailors, five hundred and eight soldiers, sixteen horse, thirteen muskets, thirty-two crossbows, a great number of swords and pikes, four falcons, and ten field-pieces.

These preparatives for invasion, however insufficient they may seem to be, had not even been furnished by the crown, which at that time only lent its name to the new discoveries and settlements. The plans of aggrandizement were formed by private persons, who conducted them according to measures either well or ill concerted, and who carried them into execution at their own expence. The thirst of gold, and the spirit of chivalry which still subsisted, were the two chief motives that excited the ferment. These two powerful incentives hurried at once into the new world men of the highest and of the lowest class in society; robbers intent on nothing but plunder; and men of exalted minds, who imagined they were pursuing the road to glory. This is the reason why the vestiges of these first conquerors were marked by so many crimes, and by so many extraordinary actions; why their cupidity was so atrocious, and their bravery so astonishing.

Cortez seemed to be animated with the two passions of riches and of fame. In going to the place of his destination, he attacked the Indians of Tabasco, beat their troops several times, compelled them to sue for peace, received homage from them, and obliged them to give him provisions, some pieces of cotton, and twenty women, who were glad to follow him. This readiness of theirs may be accounted for very naturally.

In America the men were in general addicted to that shameful kind of debauchery which shocks nature, and perverts animal instinct. This depravity has been attributed by some to natural weakness, which, however, should rather seem to be contrary than incentive to it. It may rather be ascribed to the heat of the climate; the contempt the men

have for the softer sex ; the little pleasure that can be experienced in the arms of a woman harassed with labour ; the inconstancy of taste ; the caprice which excites us in every particular to enjoyments that are least common ; and inspires us with certain inordinate propensities to voluptuousness, more easy to be conceived than explained with decency. Besides, those hunting parties, in which the men were frequently absent from the women for whole months, contributed also to familiarize men more with each other. This vice is therefore in these countries nothing more than the consequence of an universal and violent passion, which even in civilized nations tramples upon honour, virtue, decency, probity, the ties of consanguinity, and patriotic sentiment ; besides, that there are some actions to which civilized people have with reason attached moral ideas, that never have entered into the minds of savages.

However this may be, the arrival of the Europeans raised new ideas in the American women. They threw themselves without reluctance into the arms of these libidinous strangers, who had inured themselves to cruelty, and whose avaricious hands were imbrued in blood. While the unfortunate remains of these savage nations were endeavouring to separate themselves from the sword that pursued them by immense tracts of deserts, their women, who had been hitherto too much neglected, boldly trampling on the carcases of their children and of their murdered husbands, went to seek their destroyers even in their camp, in order to entice them to share the ardent transports with which they were devoured. This furious attachment of the American women for the Spaniards, may be reckoned among the causes that contributed to the conquest of the New World. These women usually served them as guides, frequently procured them subsistence, and sometimes betrayed conspiracies to them.

The most celebrated of these women was named Marina. Though she was the daughter of a tolerably powerful cacique, she had been reduced, by some singular events, to a state of slavery among the Mexicans from her earliest infancy. She had been brought, by fresh incidents, to Tabasco before the arrival of the Spaniards. Struck with her figure and her charms, they soon distinguished her from the rest. Their general surrendered his heart to her, and

at the same time excited a warm passion in her breast. In the midst of amorous embraces she readily learnt the Spanish language. Cortez, on his part, soon discovered the intelligent mind and resolute character of his mistress; and not only made her his interpreter, but also his adviser. All historians agree that she acted a considerable part in every enterprise against Mexico.

The Spaniards MONTÉZUMA was sovereign of the empire when the Spaniards landed there.

The monarch was soon informed of the arrival of these strangers. Throughout this vast extent of kingdom couriers were placed at different distances, who speedily acquainted the court with every thing that happened in the most distant provinces. Their dispatches were composed of pieces of cotton, upon which were delineated the several circumstances of the affairs that required the attention of government. The figures were intermixed with hieroglyphic characters, which supplied what the art of the painter had not been able to express.

It was to be expected, that a prince who had been raised to the throne by his valour, who had extended his empire by conquest, who was in possession of numerous and disciplined armies, would either send to attack, or would have marched himself to disperse, a handful of adventurers, who dared to insult and plunder his dominions. But this step was neglected; and the Spaniards, who had always an irresistible turn to the marvellous, endeavoured to explain, by having recourse to a miracle, a conduct so evidently opposite to the character of the monarch, and incompatible with his situation. The writers of this superstitious nation have not scrupled to declare to the whole universe, that a little before the discovery of the New World, it had been foretold to the Mexicans, that an invincible people from the East would soon come among them, who would, in a memorable and terrible manner, avenge the gods irritated by their most horrid crimes, and particularly that vice which is most repugnant to nature. This fatal prediction alone, they say, had fascinated the understanding of Montezuma. By this imposture, they imagined that they should gain the double advantage of justifying their usurpations, and making heaven answerable for a part of their cruelties.

This absurd fable has for a long time obtained credit among some persons in both hemispheres, and the infatuation is not so surprising as might at first be imagined. The reasons of it will be made evident by a few reflections.

Ancient revolutions, the period of which is uncertain, have subverted the earth ; and the science of astronomy demonstrates the possibility of these catastrophes, of which the natural and moral history of the world furnishes us with a multitude of incontestible proofs. A great number of comets are moving, in all directions, round the sun. The motions of their orbits, far from being invariable, are evidently changed by the action of the planets. Several of these bodies have passed near the earth, and may possibly have struck against it. This event is not likely to happen in the course of one year, or even of one century : but the probability of it increases so much from the number of the earth's revolutions, that it may almost be asserted, that this planet has not always escaped the shock of the different comets that have traversed its orbit.

Such a circumstance must have occasioned inexpressible ravages upon the surface of the globe. The rotatory axis being altered, the seas would abandon their former position to precipitate themselves towards the new equator ; the greatest part of the animals would either be drowned by the deluge, or destroyed by the violent shock given to the earth by the comet ; and whole species must have been annihilated ; such are the disasters which a comet must have produced.

Independent of this general cause of devastation, earthquakes, volcanoes, and a variety of other unknown causes, which act on the internal parts of the globe, as well as on its surface, must have changed the respective position of its parts, and consequently the situation of the poles upon which it rotates. The waters of the sea, displaced by these changes, must have quitted one tract of land to occupy another, and must have caused those inundations and successive deluges which have in all parts left visible marks of ruin and devastation, or lasting memorials of their fatal effects in the annals or traditions of mankind.

This perpetual struggle of one element with another ; of the earth engulfing the waters in her internal cavities ; and

of the sea encroaching upon, and swallowing up, large tracts of land; this eternal contest subsisting between two elements apparently incompatible, but in reality inseparable from each other, exposes the inhabitants of the globe to evident dangers, and fills them with apprehensions concerning their fate. The lively recollection of past, naturally inspires a dread of future changes. Hence the universal traditions concerning deluges in the earlier ages, and the expectation of the future conflagration of the world. The violent agitations which have been felt in every part of the globe, earthquakes occasioned by inundations, or volcanoes produced by those convulsions, excite and keep up terror in the minds of men. This terror has been diffused, and received the sanction of every system of superstition; and it is observed to operate most strongly in countries, such as America, where the vestiges of these revolutions of the globe are most remarkable and most recent.

Man, once possessed with fear, considers a single calamity as the parent of a thousand others. Earth and heaven seem equally to conspire his ruin: he imagines that he views death both above and beneath him: he looks upon events, which accidentally happen at the same juncture, as connected in the nature and order of things; and, as every transaction on this globe must necessarily appear under the aspect of some constellation, the stars are accused of having a share in every calamity, the cause of which is unknown; and the human mind, which has ever been bewildered in its inquiries concerning the origin of evil, has been led to suppose, that certain similar situations of the planets, however common, have an immediate and necessary influence on all revolutions happening at the time, or soon after succeeding.

Political events, in particular, on account of their greater importance to mankind, have ever been considered as more immediately depending on the motion of the stars. Hence have arisen false predictions, and the terrors they have inspired; terrors which have always disturbed the earth, and of which ignorance is the cause, at the same time that it regulates the degree of them.

Though Montezuma, as well as many other persons, might possibly have been affected with this disease of the

human mind, there is no circumstance that can induce us to impute this prevailing weakness to him. His political conduct, however, was not the wiser on this account. Since this prince had been upon the throne, he had no longer displayed any of those talents that had placed him upon it. Sunk in a state of effeminacy and indolence, he despised his subjects, and oppressed his tributaries. His mind was so debased and corrupted, that even the arrival of the Spaniards could not rouse him into action. He wasted in negotiations the time he should have employed in combat, and wished to send away, laden with presents, enemies he ought to have destroyed. Cortez, to whom this supineness was very convenient, omitted nothing that might contribute to encourage it, and always treated with him on the most friendly terms. He declared, that he was sent merely with orders to hold a conference with the powerful emperor of Mexico, on the part of the greatest monarch of the East. Whenever he was pressed to re-embark, he always represented, that no ambassador had ever been dismissed without being admitted to an audience. At length the deputies, finding him inflexible, were obliged, according to their instructions, to have recourse to menaces, and spoke in high terms of the opulence and strength of their country. Cortez then, turning to his soldiers, told them: "This is exactly what we wished to meet with, great dangers and great wealth." He had then completed all his preparatives, and gained every information that was necessary. Resolved therefore to conquer or to perish, he set fire to all his ships, and directed his march towards the capital of the empire.

In his way he met with the republic of Tlascala, which had ever been at enmity with the Mexicans, who wanted to make it subject to their empire. Cortez, not doubting but that they would favour his projects, demanded permission to pass through their country, and proposed an alliance. A people, who had prohibited themselves from holding almost any kind of intercourse with their neighbours, and whom this unfociable principle had accustomed to a general mistrust, could not be favourably inclined to strangers, whose manner was imperious, and who had signalized their arrival by insults offered to the gods of the country. Accordingly they rejected, without hesitation, the two proposals that were made to them. The surprising

accounts given of the Spaniards astonished the inhabitants of Tlascala, but did not dismay them. They fought four or five battles; in one of which the Spanish troops were broken. Cortez was obliged to intrench himself; and the Indians, who wanted nothing but arms to make them victorious, rushed to death upon his breast-works.

Another circumstance, which contributed not a little to the defeat of the Tlascalans, was a certain point of honour, dictated by the feelings of common humanity, adopted by the Greeks at the siege of Troy, and by some people among the Gauls, and established among several nations. This was the dread and disgrace, of suffering the dead or the wounded to be carried off by the enemy. An attention to this point occasioned a continual confusion in their ranks, and abated the vigour of their attacks.

A political constitution, which could not be expected to have been found in the New World, had been established in this region. The country was divided into several districts, over which princes presided with the title of caciques. They led their subjects to war, levied taxes, and administered justice: but it was necessary that their laws and edicts should have the sanction of the senate of Tlascala, in which the supreme authority resided. This body was composed of citizens, chosen out of each district by an assembly of the people.

The morals of the Tlascalans were extremely rigid. Falsehood, filial ingratitude, and sodomy, were punished with death. Theft, adultery, and drunkenness, were abhorred; and the persons guilty of these crimes were banished. Polygamy was tolerated by law. Their climate led to it, and the government encouraged it.

Military merit here, as in all uncivilized states, or such as aspire to conquest, was in the highest estimation. In their warlike expeditions they carried in their quivers two arrows, on which were engraved the figures of two of their ancient heroes. They began the engagement by discharging one of those arrows, which it was a point of honour to recover. In their towns they wore a dress, which they laid aside when they went to battle. They were celebrated for simplicity and sincerity in their public treaties, and for the veneration they paid to old men.

Their country, though uneven, of no great extent, and

only moderately fertile, was still very populous, tolerably well cultivated, and the inhabitants were happy.

Such were the people whom the Spaniards disdained to acknowledge to be of the same species with themselves. One of the qualities of the Tlascalans, which excited their contempt the most, was the love of liberty. They fancied that these people had no form of government, because it was not vested in a single person; no police, because it differed from that of Madrid; no virtues, because they were not of the same religious persuasion; and no understanding, because they did not adopt the same opinions.

Perhaps, no people have ever been so firmly attached to their national prejudices, as the Spaniards were at that time, and as they still continue to be. By these prejudices all their sentiments were dictated, their judgments influenced, and their characters formed. The strong and ardent genius they derived from nature served only to assist them in inventing sophisms to confirm them in their errors. Never was the perversion of human reason maintained in a more dogmatical, determined, obstinate, and subtle, manner: nor was their attachment to their customs less strong than to their prejudices. They thought no people in the world were intelligent, enlightened, and virtuous, except themselves. This national pride, carried to an excess of infatuation beyond example, would have inclined them to consider Athens in the same contemptuous light as they Tlascala. They would have treated the Chinese as brutes, and have everywhere left marks of outrage, oppression, and devastation.

This haughty and imperious turn of mind did not, however, prevent the Spaniards from making an alliance with the Tlascalans, who furnished them with six thousand troops to conduct their march, and assist them in their enterprise.

WITH this reinforcement, Cortez advanced towards Mexico, through a fertile country, well watered, and covered with woods, cultivated fields, villages, and gardens. The soil produced a variety of plants unknown in Europe. Birds of the brightest plumage, and animals of a new species, appeared in great abundance.

Vol. II.

The Spaniards, after having introduced themselves into the capital of the empire, are obliged to evacuate it.

P

Nature differed from herself only in assuming a more agreeable and richer dress. The temperature of the air, and the continual, though tolerable heat, preserved the earth in a constant verdure and fertility. On the same spot were seen trees covered with blossoms, and others with delicious fruits; and the corn that was sown in one field was reaped in another.

The Spaniards seemed to be insensible to the beauties of so new a scene. They saw that gold was the common ornament of the houses and temples; that the arms, furniture, and persons, of the Mexicans were adorned with the same metal. This alone attracted their notice, like Mammon, whom Milton describes as forgetting the divinity in heaven itself, and having his eyes always fixed upon its golden porches.

Montezuma's wavering disposition, and, perhaps, the fear of losing his former glory prevented him from marching against the Spaniards at their arrival, and from joining the Tlascalans, who had behaved with greater courage than he had done; and, lastly, from attacking conquerors who were fatigued with their own victories. He had contented himself with endeavouring to divert Cortez from his design of visiting his capital, and resolved at last to introduce him into it himself. Thirty kings or princes were subject to his dominion, many of whom were able to bring a numerous army into the field. He possessed considerable riches, and his power was absolute. It appears that his subjects were intelligent and industrious. They were also a warlike people, and had high notions of honour.

Had the emperor of Mexico known how to avail himself of these advantages, the sceptre could never have been wrested out of hands. But this prince, forgetting what he owed to himself and to his station, did not shew the least sign of courage or ability. When he might have crushed the Spaniards with his whole force, notwithstanding their superiority in discipline and arms, he rather chose to have recourse to perfidy.

While he loaded them with presents, caresses, and every token of respect at Mexico, he gave orders to attack Vera Cruz, a colony the Spaniards had established upon the spot where they landed, with a view of securing their retreat, and of being furnished with supplies. Cortez acquainted

his companions with the news, and said to them, "It is absolutely necessary to surprise these barbarians with some extraordinary exploit; I am resolved to seize the emperor, and make myself master of his person." This design being approved, he instantly marched with his officers to Montezuma's palace, and told him he must either follow him, or die. The prince, whose pusillanimity could only be equalled by the rashness of his enemies, resigned himself into their hands. He was obliged to consent to the punishment of the generals, who had acted only in obedience to his orders; and completed his disgrace, by submitting to do homage to the king of Spain.

In the midst of these successes, intelligence was received, that Narvaez had just arrived from Cuba with eight hundred infantry, fourscore cavalry, and twelve pieces of cannon, in order to take the command of the army, and to punish the refractory. These forces had been sent by Velasquez, who was dissatisfied that a few adventurers, sent out under his auspices, should have neglected all intercourse with him, declared themselves independent of his authority, and sent deputies into Europe, to obtain the confirmation of those powers they had arrogated to themselves. Although Cortez had no more than two hundred and fifty men, he marched up to his rival, engaged, and took him prisoner. He obliged the vanquished to lay down their arms, but afterwards restored them, and proposed that they should follow him. He gained their affections by his confidence and magnanimity; and these soldiers enlisted under his standard. He instantly marched back with them to Mexico, where he had not been able to leave more than fifty Spaniards, who with the Tlascalans closely guarded the emperor.

Commotions were excited among the nobility of Mexico, whose indignation was raised at the captivity of their prince; and the indiscreet zeal of the Spaniards having prompted them to disturb a public festival, celebrated in honour of the deities of the country, by destroying their altars, and making a massacre of the worshippers and priests, the people had been provoked to take up arms.

The Mexicans had a number of barbarous superstitions; and their priests were monsters, who made the most scandalous abuse of that abominable worship, which they had im-

posed upon the credulity of the people. They acknowledged, like all other civilized nations, a Supreme Being, and a future state of rewards and punishments : but these sublime doctrines were disgraced by a mixture of absurdities, which destroyed their credibility.

The religious system of the Mexicans taught them to expect the final catastrophe of the world at the conclusion of every century ; and that year was distinguished throughout the whole empire by every mark of grief and consternation.

The Mexicans invoked inferior powers in the same manner as other nations have invoked genii, camis, manitous, angels, and fetiches. The lowest of this class of deities had all their temples, images, functions, and distinct authority assigned them, with the power of working miracles.

The Mexicans had also their holy water to sprinkle the people ; and the emperor drank of it. Pilgrimages, processions, and donations to the priests, were esteemed acts of piety ; and they were no strangers to expiations, penances, mortifications, and abstinence. They had some superstitious observances peculiar to themselves. A slave was annually chosen, and shut up in the temple ; to him they paid adoration, offered incense, invoked him as a diety, and concluded the scene by putting him to death with great solemnity.

Another piece of superstition, of which no traces are to be found in any other country, was this : on certain days the priest made a statue of paste, which they sent to the oven to be baked ; they then placed it upon an altar, where it became a divinity. Upon this day innumerable crowds of people flocked to the temple. The priests cut the statue in pieces, and distributed of it to all the persons in the assembly, who ate it, and thought they were sanctified by swallowing their god.

It was certainly more eligible to eat gods than men : and yet the Mexicans sacrificed their prisoners of war in the temple of the god of battles. The priests, it is said, afterwards ate them, and sent portions to the emperor, and the principal lords of the realm. When peace had lasted some time, the priests took care to have it insinuated to the emperor, that the gods were hungry ; and war was commenced with no other view than to make prisoners.

Such a system of religion was, in every view, odious and

terrible; and all its ceremonies were of a dismal and sanguinary cast. It kept mankind perpetually in awe, was calculated to make a people cruel, and to give the priests an unlimited authority.

These barbarous absurdities, though they might justly excite the detestation of the Spaniards, could not justify their attempts to suppress them by the greatest cruelties. They could not justify them in attacking and murdering a people assembled in the principal temple of the capital; or in assassinating the nobles in order to seize upon their possessions.

On his return to Mexico, Cortez found the Spaniards besieged on the spot where he had left them. It was a space of sufficient extent to contain the Spaniards and their allies, and surrounded with a thick wall, upon which were placed towers at different distances. The artillery had been disposed in the best manner possible; and the service had been always executed with as much regularity and vigilance as in a besieged place, or in the most exposed camp. The general was not able to make his way into this kind of fortress, till after he had encountered many difficulties; and when he had at length got into it, the dangers still continued. Such was the obstinate fury of the natives of the country, that they exposed themselves to the risk of penetrating through the embrasures of the cannon, into the asylum which they wished to force.

In order to relieve themselves from so desperate a situation, the Spaniards had recourse to sallies: which were successful, without being decisive. The Mexicans gave proofs of extraordinary courage. They cheerfully devoted themselves to certain death. Naked and ill-armed, they were seen to throw themselves into the ranks of the Spaniards, with a view of making their arms useless, or wresting them out of their hands. They were all ready to perish, in order to rescue their country from the yoke of these foreign usurpers.

The most bloody engagement was fought upon an eminence which the Americans had seized, and from whence they overwhelmed all that presented themselves with showers of arrows, more or less destructive. The party charged with dislodging them, was three times repulsed. Cortez was irritated by this resistance, and though much wounded,

resolved to take the attack upon himself. Scarce had he got possession of this important post, than two young Mexicans threw down their arms, and came over to him as deserters. Placing one knee on the ground in a suppliant posture, they sprang upon him with extreme quickness, and seized him in hopes of making him perish by dragging him away along with them. Cortez, either by his strength or dexterity, disengaged himself from them; and the two Mexicans died the victims of this noble but fruitless enterprise.

This, and many other exploits, which shewed equal courage, made the Spaniards desirous of coming to terms of accommodation. At length Montezuma, still a prisoner, consented to become the instrument of his people's slavery; and, in all the pomp of the throne, he made his appearance upon the wall, to persuade his subjects to discontinue hostilities. Their resentment convinced him that his reign was at an end, and he was mortally wounded by the shower of arrows they discharged at him.

This tragical event was followed by a new arrangement of things. The Mexicans at length perceived, that their plan of defence and their plan of attack were equally defective; and resolved to do nothing more than intercept the provisions, and reduce by famine an enemy, whom the superiority of their discipline and of their arms rendered invincible. Cortez no sooner perceived this change of measures, than he thought of securing a retreat among the Tlascalans.

The execution of this project required great dispatch, impenetrable secrecy, and well-concerted measures. The march was begun in the middle of the night: the army was silently filing off along a bank, when the rear guard was attacked by a numerous body, and the flanks by canoes distributed on each side of the causeway. If the Mexicans, who had a greater number of troops than they could bring into action, had taken the precaution to place some at the extremity of the bridges which they had prudently broken, all the Spaniards, and their allies, would have perished in this bloody engagement. Fortunately for them, the enemy knew not how to avail himself of all his advantages; and they at length reached the borders of the lake, after having undergone a variety of incredible dangers and fatigues. The confusion they were in still exposed them to

a total defeat, when they were relieved from this danger by a fresh error of the enemy.

No sooner had the morning dawn discovered to the Mexicans the field of battle, of which they were masters, than they perceived among the slain, a son and two daughters of Montezuma, whom the Spaniards were carrying off with some other prisoners. This sight chilled them with horror. The idea of having massacred the children, after having sacrificed the father, was too violent for men, enfeebled and enervated by a habit of blind obedience, to be able to bear. They were afraid of adding impiety to regicide; and employed in idle funeral rites the time they owed to the preservation of their country.

During this interval, the beaten army, which had lost its artillery, ammunition, and baggage, with five or six hundred Spaniards, and two thousand Tlascalans, and which had scarce a soldier remaining that was not wounded, was resuming its march. The enemy soon pursued, harassed, and at length surrounded it in the valley of Otumba. The cannonade, and the firing of the small arms, the pikes and swords, did not prevent the Indians, all naked as they were, from advancing and charging their enemies with great fury. Courage was just upon the point of yielding to numbers, when Cortez himself determined the fortune of the day. He had been informed, that in this part of the new world the fate of the battle depended upon the royal standard. These colours, the form of which was remarkable, and which were never brought into the field but on the most important occasions, were at no great distance from him. He immediately rushed forward, with the bravest of his companions, to take them from the enemy. One of them seized and carried them into the Spanish ranks. The Mexicans immediately lost all courage; and throwing down their arms, betook themselves to flight. Cortez pursued his march, and arrived in the country of Tlascala without opposition.

CORTEZ did not relinquish either the design or the hopes of subduing the empire of Mexico; but he adopted a new plan, and proposed to make one part of the inhabitants assist him in the reduction

The Spaniards employ other means for subduing Mexico with success...

of the other. The form of the Mexican government, the disposition of the people, and the situation of the city, favoured his project and facilitated the execution of it.

The empire was elective, and certain princes or caciques were the electors. They usually chose one of their own body. He was obliged to take an oath, that, so long as he filled the throne, the rains should fall in due season, the rivers cause no inundations, the fields be exempt from sterility, and that mankind should not be destroyed by the malignant effects of a contagious air. This custom may have had some reference to a theocratical government, the traces of which are still to be found almost among all nations in the world. It might likewise probably be the intention of this whimsical oath, to intimate to the new sovereign, that, as the misfortunes of a state almost always arise from wrong measures of administration, his government ought to be conducted with such moderation and wisdom, that public calamities might never be considered as the consequences of his imprudence, or as the just punishment of his licentiousness. According to the admirable tenor of their laws, merit was the only title to the crown : but superstition had given the priests a considerable influence in their elections. On his accession to the throne, the emperor was obliged to make war, and to offer the prisoners to the gods. This prince, though elective, had an absolute authority, as there were no written laws ; and he was at liberty to make what alterations he chose in the old customs. Almost all the forms of justice, and ceremonies of the court, had the sanction of religion. The same crimes that are punished in all other places were punishable by the laws ; but the criminals were often saved by the interposition of the priests. There were two laws which had a tendency to destroy the innocent, and to make the Mexicans bend under the double yoke of tyranny and superstition. By these laws, persons offending against the sanctity of religion, or the majesty of the prince, were condemned to death. It is easy to discern how much laws of so little precision might afford opportunities of gratifying private revenge, or of promoting the interested views of priests and courtiers.

The steps by which private men obtained the rank of nobility, and the nobility rose to posts of honour, were bravery, piety, and perseverance. In the temples a more pain-

ful noviciate was prescribed than in the army ; and the nobles, who had undergone such hardships to obtain their distinctions, submitted to the meanest employments in the palace of the emperors.

Among the great numbers of vassals in Mexico, Cortez concluded there might be some who would be ready to shake off the yoke and join the Spaniards. He had remarked that the Mexicans were holden in great detestation by the petty states that were subject to the empire, and that the emperors exercised their authority with extreme severity. He had likewise observed, that the provinces in general disliked the religion of the metropolis, and that even in Mexico the nobility and persons of fortune, whose intercourse with society had abated the force of their prejudices, and softened their popular manners, had lost their attachment to this mode of religion ; and that many of the nobility were disgusted at the low services exacted of them by their masters.

After Cortez had been silently deliberating upon his great projects, and bringing them to maturity, during six months, he marched out of his retreat, attended by five hundred and ninety Spaniards, ten thousand Tlascalans, and some other Indians, bringing along with them forty horses, and eight or nine field-pieces. His march towards the centre of the Mexican dominions was easy and rapid. The petty nations, which might have retarded or embarrassed it, were all easily subdued, or voluntarily surrendered themselves to him. Many of the districts in the neighbourhood of the capital of the empire were also forced to yield to him, or submitted of themselves.

Successes calculated to astonish even the most presumptuous, ought naturally to have attached every individual to the intrepid and prescient commander, whose work they were ; but this was not the case. -Among his Spanish troops, there were rather a considerable number, who had kept up too lively a recollection of the dangers which they had escaped with so much difficulty ; and who were become traitors, from the dread of those they had still to encounter. They agreed among themselves to assassinate their general, and to give the command to a person who would abandon projects which appeared to them extravagant ; and would take prudent measures for their preservation. The

treason was just upon the point of being carried into execution, when remorse induced one of the conspirators to throw himself at the feet of Cortez. Immediately this bold man, the resources of whose genius were more and more unfolded by unexpected events, caused Villafagna, the principal agent in this dark plot, to be arrested, tried, and sentenced, but not till he had extorted from him an accurate list of his accomplices. The business was to dissipate the anxiety which such a discovery might occasion. This was effected, by giving out that the villain had torn a paper, which contained, no doubt, either the plan of the conspiracy, or the names of the conspirators; and that he had carried his secret with him to the grave, notwithstanding the severity of the torments employed to extort it from him.

In the meanwhile, the general, in order not to give his troops time to reflect too much upon what had happened, hastened to the attack of Mexico, the grand object of his ambition, and the ultimate end of the hopes of the army: the project was attended with great difficulty.

Mountains, which for the most part were a thousand feet high, surrounded a plain of about forty leagues. The greater part of this immense space was occupied by lakes which communicated with each other. At the northern extremity of the greatest of these, in the midst of a few small islands, had been built the most considerable city that existed in the New World, before the Europeans had discovered it. Three causeways, of different lengths, but all of them broad, and constructed with solidity, led up to it. The inhabitants of the shores, too distant from these great roads, came up to them in their canoes.

Cortez made himself master of the navigation, by means of some small vessels, the materials of which had been prepared at Tlascala; and he ordered the dykes to be attacked by Sandoval, by Alvarado, and by Olid, to each of whom he distributed an equal number of guns, of Spanish troops, and of Indian auxiliaries.

Every thing had been disposed for a long time to make an obstinate resistance. The means of defence had been prepared by Quetlavaca, who had succeeded his brother Montezuma; but who had perished of the small-pox,

brought into these regions by a slave belonging to Narvaez; and when the siege began, the reins of the empire were guided by Guatimozin.

The actions of this young prince were all heroic, and all prudent. The fire of his look, the elevation of his discourse, and the brilliancy of his courage, made every impression he wished upon his people. He disputed the ground foot by foot, and never abandoned a single inch of it, till it was strewed with the carcases of his soldiers, and stained with the blood of his enemies. Fifty thousand men, who had hastened from all parts of the empire to defend their master and their gods, had perished by the sword or by fire; famine occasioned daily inexpressible ravages; to these numerous calamities contagious diseases had been added, and yet, all these circumstances had not been capable of shaking the firmness of his soul, even for one single instant. The besiegers, after a number of destructive battles and heavy losses, had at length reached the centre of the place, which, however, he did not yet think of giving up. He was at last prevailed upon to quit these ruins, which could no longer be defended, in order to repair to the provinces, and to carry on the war there. In the view of facilitating this retreat, some overtures of peace were made to Cortez; but this noble artifice had not the success that it deserved; and the canoe, in which this generous and unfortunate monarch had embarked was taken by a brigantine. An officer of the Spanish revenue, suspecting that he had treasures concealed, ordered him to be extended upon red-hot coals to extort a confession. His favourite, who underwent the same torture, complaining to him of his sufferings, the emperor said, "am I upon a bed of roses?" An expression equal to any of those which history has recorded as worthy the admiration of mankind; an expression which the Mexicans would repeat to their children, if ever the period should arrive, in which the Spaniards shall expiate the cruelties they have exercised, and that race of destroyers shall be plunged into the sea, or drowned in their own blood. These people might, perhaps, have preserved the actions of their martyrs, and the history of their persecutions. In these it will be recorded, that Guatimozin was dragged half dead from the flames, and that three years after he was publicly hanged,

under pretence of his having conspired against his tyrants and executioners.

Idea we are to form of Mexico before it submitted to Spain.

AFTER ten weeks of a brisk and regular attack, with the assistance of sixty or a hundred thousand Indian allies, and by the superiority of their discipline, their arms, and their shipping, the Spaniards at length made themselves masters of Mexico; and if we may credit the accounts they give, it was a magnificent city. There were thirty thousand houses, an immense number of inhabitants, and some superb edifices within its walls. The sovereign's palace, built of marble and jasper, was of prodigious extent. It was ornamented with baths, statues, and fountains; and was full of pictures, which, though made only of feathers, were finely coloured, brilliant, and natural. Most of the great, as well as the emperor, had menageries filled with all the animals of the new continent. Their gardens were spread with plants of every species. Every production of the soil and climate that was scarce and brilliant, was an object of luxury to an opulent nation, where nature was beautiful and the arts imperfect. The temples were numerous, and in general magnificent; but they were stained with blood, and lined with the heads of the unhappy victims that had been sacrificed in them.

One of the greatest beauties of this dazzling city, was a square, which was usually filled with a hundred thousand persons, overspread with tents and shops, where the merchants displayed all the riches of the country, and all the works of industry wrought by the Mexicans. Birds of all colours, brilliant shells, a profusion of flowers, and various pieces of workmanship in gold and enamel, gave these markets a more beautiful and splendid appearance to the eye than it is possible to meet with in the richest fairs of Europe.

One hundred thousand canoes were constantly passing and repassing between the city and the borders of the lakes; which were ornamented with fifty cities, and with a multitude of towns and villages.

The rest of the empire, as far as the respective situations would allow, presented the same spectacle: but with the difference that is always observed between the capital and the provinces. This nation, the antiquity of which was

not very remote, which had no communication with enlightened people, which knew not the use of iron, and had not the advantage of writing, which was ignorant of those arts by which we have the advantage of being acquainted with others, and of practising them, and which was situated in a climate where the faculties of man are not called forth by want; this nation, we are told, had risen to this degree of eminence by its genius alone.

This is a pompous description, given in an instant of vanity by a conqueror naturally addicted to exaggeration, or deceived by the great superiority which a well-regulated state had over the savage regions that had yet been laid waste in the new Hemisphere; and the falsity of it may easily be made evident to every man's capacity. It is, not, however, merely by contrasting the present state of Mexico with that in which its conquerors pretend to have found it, that this can be effected. The deplorable effects of a destructive tyranny, and of a long series of oppression, are sufficiently known. But let us call to mind the ravages which the barbarians, issuing from the north, formerly committed among the Gauls and in Italy. When this torrent had passed away, did there not remain upon the earth great monuments which attested, and do still attest, the power of the people that had been subdued? And does the region we are now considering, present us with such magnificent ruins? We must therefore take it for granted, that the public and private edifices, so pompously described, were nothing more than irregular masses of stone heaped upon one another; that the celebrated Mexico was nothing more than a little town, composed of a multitude of rustic huts, irregularly dispersed over a large space of ground; and that the other places, the grandeur and beauty of which it has been customary to extol, were still inferior to this first of the cities.

The labours of men have always been proportioned to their strength, and to the instruments they have made use of. Without the science of mechanics, and the invention of its machines, there can be no great monuments existing. Without a quadrant or a telescope, there can be no great progress made in astronomy, no precision in observations. Without iron, there can be no hammers, no pincers, no anvils, no forges, no saws, no axes, no hatchets, no work in metal that can deserve to be looked at; no masonry, no carpenters'

or joiners' work, no architecture, no engraving, no sculpture. With all these helps, what time does it not take our workmen to separate from the quarry, raise and carry away a block of stone? What time to cut into a square? And how could this be effected without the resources we have? The savage would have been a man of great understanding, who, upon seeing for the first time, one of our large buildings, would have admired it, not as the work of our strength and industry, but as an extraordinary phenomenon of nature, which of herself should have raised those columns, bored those windows, fixed those entablatures, and prepared to wonderful a retreat. It would have been to him the most beautiful cavern that the mountains would have ever presented to his view.

Let us strip Mexico of all that has been bellowed upon it by fabulous accounts, and we shall find that this country, though far superior to the savage regions which the Spaniards had yet discovered in the New World, was still nothing in comparison of the civilized nations of the old continent.

The empire was subject to a despotism as cruel as it was ill-concerted. Fear, the great spring of arbitrary governments, was substituted to morality and principles. The chief of the state was gradually become a kind of divinity, which the most presumptuous did not dare to look up to; and of whose actions the most imprudent would not have ventured to form a judgment. We may readily conceive in what manner citizens purchase every day, by the sacrifice of their liberty, the pleasures and conveniencies of life to which they have been accustomed from their infancy: but that people, to whom rude nature offered greater happiness than that which they enjoyed under the social compact that united them, should quietly remain in a state of slavery, without once thinking that there was nothing more than a mountain or a river to cross, in order to be free; this is a circumstance that would be incomprehensible, if we knew not how much the habit of superstition degrades the human race in all parts.

Several of the provinces, which might be considered as constituting a part of this vast dominion, governed themselves by their primary laws, and according to their ancient maxims. Tributaries merely of the empire, they conti-

nued still under the controul of their caciques. The obligations imposed upon these great vassals, was to cover or to enlarge the frontiers of the state, whenever they were ordered; to contribute continually to the public charges, originally, according to a settled rate; but latterly, according to the necessities, rapacity, or caprices of the despot.

The administration of the countries, more immediately dependent on the throne, was intrusted to some of the great, who were assisted in their functions by nobles of an inferior order. These officers enjoyed, at first, a degree of dignity and importance: but they were nothing more than the instruments of tyranny, since arbitrary power had raised itself upon the ruins of a government which might have been called feudal.

To each of these offices, a portion of land, of greater or less extent, was attached. Those who directed the councils, who commanded the armies, or whom their employments detained at court, enjoyed the same advantage. Persons in office changed their dwelling with their occupation, and lost it as soon as they returned into private life.

There were some possessions more entire, and which might be alienated or transmitted to posterity. These were few in number; and must have belonged to citizens of the most distinguished class.

The people had nothing but commons, the extent of which was regulated by the number of inhabitants. In some of them the labours were carried on in a community, and the harvests were deposited in the public granaries, to be distributed as they were wanted; in others, the cultivators divided the fields between them, and tilled them for their own private use; but the territory was not allowed to be disposed of in any of them.

Several districts, more or less extensive, were covered with a kind of bondsmen attached to the glebe, passing from one proprietor to another, and not being able to claim any thing more than the coarsest and most scanty subsistence.

The men still more degraded, were the domestic slaves. Their life was esteemed so contemptible, that, according to the accounts of Herrera, one might deprive

them of it, without fear of being ever prosecuted by the law.

All the orders of the state contributed to the support of government. In all societies that are a little advanced, taxes are paid in specie. The Mexicans were ignorant of this common measure of every kind of value, though gold and silver were in their possession. They had indeed begun to suspect the utility of an universal mode of exchange, and they already employed the seeds of the cocoa in some trifling details of commerce : but the use of these was much limited, and could not be extended to the discharge of the taxes. The debts due to the treasury were therefore all paid in kind.

As all the agents of the public service received their salaries in provisions, a part of what was allotted to them was kept back as their contribution.

The lands attached to offices, as well as those that were possessed in property, gave to the state a part of their produce.

Beside the obligation imposed upon all communities to cultivate a certain extent of soil for the crown, they were also obliged to cede to it a third part of their harvests.

Hunters, fishermen, potters, painters, and all workmen without distinction, gave up the same portion of their industry every month.

Even the beggars were taxed with certain fixed contributions, which they were obliged to pay from their labour, or from the alms they received.

Agriculture, at Mexico, was very much confined ; though it was the only occupation of the majority of the inhabitants. Their cares were restrained to the cultivation of maize and cocoa, and there was even but a small quantity of those productions gathered. Had it been otherwise, the first Spaniards would not so frequently have been in want of subsistence. The imperfect state of this first of the arts might be owing to several causes. These people had a strong propensity to idleness. The instruments they made use of were faulty. They had not tamed any animal that could assist them in their labours. Their fields were ravaged by fallow deer, or by wandering people. They were incessantly oppressed by government. In a word, their na-

tural constitution was particularly weak, which arose partly from unwholesome and insufficient food.

The table of the rich, of the nobles, and of men in office, beside the produce of the chase, and of fishing, was supplied with turkeys, ducks, and rabbits, the only animals, except little dogs, which the inhabitants of these countries had been able to tame. But the provisions of the common people consisted only of maize, prepared in different manners; of cocoa, diluted in warm water, and seasoned with honey and pimento; and of the herbs of the fields which were not too hard, or had no bad smell. Their drink consisted of some liquors that could not intoxicate. With respect to strong liquors, they were so strictly prohibited, that a permission from government was necessary to be obtained for using them; and it was only granted to old or sick persons. At some solemnities, and in public labours only, every one had a quantity given him proportioned to his age. Drunkenness was considered as the most odious of all vices. Persons convicted of it, were publicly shaved, and their house was pulled down. If they were in any public office, they were deprived of it, and declared incapable of ever holding any post under government.

The Mexicans were almost generally naked. Their bodies were painted; and their heads shaded with plumes. Some bones, or small pieces of gold, according to the rank of the persons, were fastened to their noses and ears. The only clothing the women had, was a kind of shift which came down to the knees, and was open at the breast. Their chief ornament consisted in the arrangement of their hair. Persons of superior rank, and even the emperor himself, were only distinguished from the commonalty, by a kind of cloak composed of a square piece of cotton fastened on the right shoulder.

The palace of the prince, and those of the nobles, though rather extensive, and built of stone, had no conveniences, no elegance, nor even any windows. The people dwelt in huts made of earth, and covered with branches of trees. They were prohibited from raising them above the ground floor. Several families were frequently heaped together under the same roof.

The furniture was worthy of the dwellings. In most of them, there was no other carpeting but mats, no other bed

than straw, no seat but a layer of palm leaves, no utensils except earthen-ware. Cloths and carpets of cotton, wrought with more or less care, and employed for various purposes, were the chief distinctions between the houses of the rich and those of the common people.

If the arts of primary necessity were in so imperfect a state at Mexico, we must conclude that those of ornament were still more so. The form and workmanship of the few vases and jewels of gold and silver that have been brought to us, is equally barbarous. The same coarseness prevails in those pictures, of which the first Spaniards spoke with so much admiration, and which were composed of feathers of all colours. These paintings are no longer existing, or are at least very scarce; but engravings have been made from them. The artist is infinitely below his subject, whether he represents plants, animals, or men. There is no light, nor shade, nor design, nor accuracy in his work. Neither had architecture made any greater progress in this country. Throughout the whole extent of the empire, there is no ancient monument to be found, that hath any kind of majesty in it; nor are there even any ruins which renew the idea of former greatness. The only things Mexico had to boast of, were the causeways that led up to the capital, and the aqueducts which brought the water for drinking from a very considerable distance.

The sciences were still less advanced than the arts; and this is the natural consequence of the ordinary progress of the human mind. It is scarce possible that a people, whose civilization was not of ancient date, and who could not have received any instruction from their neighbours, should have the least extensive degree of knowledge. All that can be concluded from their religious and political institutions is, that they had made some little progress in astronomy. But how many ages would it have required to enlighten them, since they were deprived of the assistance of writing, and since they were still far distant from this powerful, and perhaps only mode of acquiring knowledge, as it appears from the imperfection of their hieroglyphics.

These were pictures traced out upon the barks of trees, upon the skins of fallow deer, or upon pieces of cotton; and destined to preserve the memory of the laws, the tenets, and the revolutions of the empire. The number, the co-

lour, and the attitude of the figures, were all varied according to the objects that were meant to be expressed. Although these imperfect signs could not be supposed to have that distinct character which precludes every reasonable doubt, yet we may imagine, that when assisted by the traditions of societies and families, they might convey some information respecting past events. The indifference of the conquerors for every thing that had no reference to their insatiable avidity, made them neglect to inquire for the key of these important deposits. Soon after, their monks looked upon them as monuments of idolatry; and Zummeraga, the first bishop of Mexico, condemned all that could be collected of them to the flames. The little that escaped from this fanatical conflagration, and which has been preserved in one or the other hemisphere, has not contributed to dispel the darkness into which the negligence of the first Spaniards had plunged us.

The era of the foundation of the empire is even unknown. The Castilian historians, indeed, tell us, that before the tenth century, this vast space was inhabited only by some wandering hordes that were entirely savage. They tell us, that about this period, some tribes issuing from the north and north west, occupied parts of the territories, and introduced milder manners. They tell us, that three hundred years after, a people still more advanced in civilization, and coming from the neighbourhood of California, settled on the borders of the lakes and built Mexico there. They tell us, that this last nation, so superior to the others, had, for a long period, nothing but chiefs, whom they raised to the government, or deprived them of it, as they found it suitable to their interests. They tell us, that the authority, which till then had been divided and revocable, was concentrated in a single person, and became permanent, one hundred and thirty, or one hundred and ninety-seven years before the arrival of the Spaniards. They tell us, that the nine monarchs, who successively ascended the throne, gave the domains of the state an extension which they had not had under the former government. But what degree of credit can we reasonably grant to annals so confused and contradictory, and filled with the most absurd fables that have ever been proposed to the credulity of mankind? In order to believe that a society whose dominion was so ex-

tensive, whose institutions were so numerous, and whose form of worship was so regular, had so modern an origin as it hath been said, we should have other testimonies beside those of the fierce soldier, who had neither the necessary talents nor the will to examine into any thing; we should have other vouchers beside those fanatic priests, who were intent upon nothing else but erecting their own form of worship upon the ruin of the superstitions they found established there. What should we know of China, if the Portuguese had been able to set it in flames, to subvert or destroy it, as they have done the Brazils? Should we at this day speak of the antiquity of the Chinese books, of their laws, and their manners? When some philosophers shall have been allowed to penetrate into Mexico, to search for, and to decipher the ruins of their history, and that these learned men shall neither be monks nor Spaniards, but either English or French, who shall have full liberty, and all proper means for the discovery of truth; then perhaps, we may gain some information concerning the history of this country, if barbarism hath not completely destroyed all the monuments that could assist in investigating it.

These inquiries could not, however, lead to an exact knowledge of the ancient population of the empire, which, according to the reports of the conquerors, was immense. The country places were covered with inhabitants; the towns were crowded with citizens, and the armies were very numerous. Absurd narrators! have we not been assured by you that it was a rising state; that it was continually disturbed with obstinate wars; that all prisoners were either massacred upon the field of battle, or sacrificed to the gods in the temples; that at the death of every emperor, of every cacique, and of every great man, a number of victims, proportioned to their dignity, were sacrificed on their tombs; that from a prevailing depraved inclination the women were neglected; that the mothers suckled their children for four or five years, and that they became barren at an early period; that the people groaned incessantly, and in all parts, under the oppressions of the treasury; that the provinces were covered with corrupted waters and vast forests; and that the Spanish adventurers had more to suffer from dearth, than from the length of marches, or the darts of the enemy?

How shall we reconcile facts certified by so many witnesses, with that excessive population so solemnly attested in your proud annals? Before sound philosophy had attentively considered your strange contradictions; and when the odium you had drawn upon yourselves insured an implicit faith in your absurd exaggerations, the universe, which saw no more than a desert in Mexico, was persuaded that you had precipitated numberless generations into the grave. Undoubtedly, your ferocious soldiers did too often stain themselves with innocent blood; undoubtedly, your fanatic missionaries did not oppose these barbarities as they ought to have done; undoubtedly, a restless tyranny, and an insatiable avarice, carried off from this unfortunate part of the world many of its feeble children: but still your cruelties were less than the nations have reason to suppose, from the accounts given by the historians of your ravages. And it is I whom you look upon as the detracter of your character, who, while I accuse you of ignorance and imposture, become, as much as possible, your apologist.

Would ye rather choose that the number of your assassinations should be exaggerated, than that your stupidity and contradictions should be unmasked? In this place, I call heaven to witness, I have been attentive only to cleanse you from the blood with which you seem to make it your glory to be covered; and in every other part where I have spoken of you, my only design hath been to suggest means of restoring your nation to its former splendour, and of alleviating the destiny of those wretched people that are subject to your empire. If you discover in me any secret hatred, or any motive of self-interest, I give myself up to your contempt. Have I treated the other destroyers of the New World, even the French, my own countrymen, with more caution? Why, therefore, should you be the only people who are offended? Because you have nothing but pride remaining. Become powerful again, and you will become less captious; and truth, while it makes you blush, will cease to anger you.

Whatever was the population of Mexico, the taking of the capital occasioned the subjection of the whole state; which was not so extensive as it hath been generally supposed to be. Upon the South sea, the empire began only at Nicaragua, and ended at Acapulco: and even part of

the coasts watered by this ocean, had never been subdued. Upon the North sea, there was scarce any thing that intersected it from the river of Tabasco to that of Panuco : but in the inland parts, Tlascala, Tepeaca, Mechoacan, Chiapa, and some other less considerable districts, had preserved their independence. Their freedom was taken from them in less than a year by the conqueror, who found it sufficient to send ten, fifteen, or twenty horse, to preclude all resistance ; and before the end of the year 1522, the provinces, which had rejected the laws of the Mexicans, and rendered the communication between their possessions difficult or impracticable, constituted all a part of the Spanish dominion. In process of time, it acquired immense additions on the northern side. These would even have been more considerable, and particularly more useful, had it not been for the incredible barbarities that accompanied or followed the acquisition of them.

As soon as the Castilians had made themselves masters of Mexico, they divided the best lands among themselves ; they reduced to slavery the people who had cleared them, and condemned them to labours incompatible with the nature of their constitution, and repugnant to their habits. This system of general oppression excited considerable insurrections. These arose without a concurrence of measures, without a chief to direct them, and without a plan ; they were the effect of despair alone ; and ended to the disadvantage of the too unfortunate Indians. An irritated conqueror, with fire and sword in hand, passed with extreme rapidity from one extremity of the empire to the other, and left in all parts memorable traces of vengeance, the details of which would make the most bloody-minded men shudder. There was a barbarous emulation between the officer and the foldier, which should sacrifice most victims ; and even the commander himself, perhaps, surpassed his troops and lieutenants in ferocity.

Cortez, however, did not reap the advantages he might expect from so many acts of inhumanity. It began to be a maxim of policy in the court of Madrid, not to leave such of her subjects as had signalized themselves by some important discovery, time enough to settle themselves in their authority, from the apprehension, well or ill founded, that they might think of rendering themselves independent of

the crown. If the conqueror of Mexico did not give a reason for adopting such a system, he was at least one of the first victims of it. The unlimited powers he had at first enjoyed, were daily curtailed; and in process of time, they were so exceedingly restrained, that he preferred a private situation to the vain appearances of an authority accompanied with the greatest disgust. This Spaniard was despotic and cruel; and his successes are tarnished by the injustice of his projects. He was an assassin covered with innocent blood: but his vices were of the times, and of his nation, and his virtues were his own. Let us place this man among the ancients. Let us give him another country, another education, another turn of mind, other manners, and a different religion. Let us put him at the head of the fleet that advanced against Xerxes; or reckon him among the Spartans at the Straits of Thermopylæ; or suppose him to be one of those generous Batavians who freed themselves from the tyranny of their countrymen, and Cortez will appear a great man. His qualities will become heroic, and his memory will be irreproachable. Had Cæsar been born in the fifteenth century, and commanded at Mexico, he would have been a worse man than Cortez. To find an excuse for the faults that have been laid to his charge, we must ask ourselves what better expectations we could have formed of a man, who treads for the first time upon unknown regions, and whose first object is to provide for his own safety? It would be highly unjust to confound him with the peaceable founder, who is acquainted with the country, and regulates the measures, the space, and the time, at pleasure.

SINCE Mexico had been subjected to the Castilians, this immense country was no longer exposed to invasion. Its provinces were not ravaged by any neighbouring or distant enemy. The peace it enjoyed was not disturbed from without, except by pirates. In the South sea, the enterprises of these robbers were confined to the taking of a few ships: but in the North sea, they pillaged Campeachy once, and Vera Cruz twice; and they frequently spread devastation upon coasts less known, less opulent, and not so well defended.

External and internal troubles with which Mexico has been agitated since it has become a Spanish possession.

While the navigation and the shores of this wealthy region were a prey to the pirates, and to the squadrons of the nations disgusted at the ambition of Spain, or merely jealous of its superiority, the Chichimecas disturbed the interior part of the empire. If we give credit to Herrera and Torquemada, these were the people who occupied the best parts of the country before the arrival of the Mexicans. To avoid the yoke destined for them by the conqueror, they took refuge in caverns and mountains, where their natural ferocity increased, and where they led entirely the life of beasts. The new revolution which had just changed the state of the former country, did not incline them to milder manners; and what they saw or learnt of the character of the Spaniards, inspired them with implacable hatred against a nation so proud and so oppressive. This passion, always terrible among savages, manifested itself by the ravages they committed in all the settlements formed in their neighbourhood, and by the cruelties they exercised upon those who attempted to open the mines. In vain had forts and garrisons been stationed upon the frontiers, to contain or suppress them; their rage continued incessantly till the year 1592. At this period, Captain Caldena persuaded them to put an end to their hostilities. In the view of rendering these pacific sentiments durable, the government made them build dwellings, collected them into several villages, and sent among them four hundred Tlascalcan families, who were commissioned to instruct them in some arts, and to teach agriculture to a people who had hitherto been clothed only with the skins of beasts, and had lived entirely by hunting, or upon the spontaneous productions of nature. It was long before these prudent measures succeeded. The Chichimecas refused for a long time to receive the instructions the government had undertaken to give them, and even rejected every kind of intercourse with benevolent and American teachers. It was not till the year 1608, that Spain was freed from the care of clothing and feeding them.

Eighteen years after, a most violent contest happened between the civil and ecclesiastical power at Mexico. A man convicted of a multitude of crimes, sought impunity for all his enormities at the foot of the altars. The viceroy Gelves caused him to be dragged from thence. This act of necessary justice was construed into an outrage against the di-

vinity. The thunder of excommunication was immediately sent forth ; and the people rose. The regular and secular clergy took up arms. The palace of the commander was burnt ; his guards, friends, and partizans were put to the sword. He himself was put in irons and sent to Europe, with seventy gentlemen who had not been afraid to espouse his cause. The archbishop, who was the author of all these calamities, and whose vengeance was not yet satisfied, pursued his victim, with the wish and desire of sacrificing him. The court, after having hesitated for some time, decided at length in favour of fanaticism. The defender of the rights of the throne, and of order, was condemned to total oblivion ; and his successor was authorised solemnly to consecrate all the notions of superstition, and particularly the superstition of asylums.

The word asylum taken in its full extent, might signify any place, privilege or distinction, that protects a criminal from the impartial exercise of justice. For what is the claim that weakens and suspends the authority of the law ? An asylum. What is the place of confinement that withdraws the guilty from the prison common to all malefactors ? An asylum. What is a retreat where the creditor cannot go and seize upon his fraudulent debtor ? An asylum. What is a district where one may exercise all the functions of society without authority, and in a country where all the rest of the citizens cannot obtain that privilege without a premium ? An asylum. What is a tribunal to which one may appeal from a definitive sentence pronounced by another, which is supposed to be the last resort of the law ? An asylum. What is an exclusive privilege, for whatever motive it may have been solicited and obtained ? An asylum. In an empire where the citizens partaking unequally of the advantages of society, do not share the burdens of it in proportion to these advantages, what are the different distinctions that relieve some at the expence of others ? They are asylums.

The asylums of the tyrant, of the priest, of the statesman, of the nobleman, of the contractor, and of the merchant, are well known ; and I could name those of almost all the ranks of society. What portion is there indeed of society that hath not a protection for a certain number of malversations, which it may commit with impunity.

The most dangerous of asylums, however, is not that into which a man may make his escape, but that which he carries about with him, that which accompanies and invests the guilty person, which serves him as a shield, and which forms between him and me an enclosure in the centre of which he stands, and from whence he may insult me, while punishment cannot reach him. Such are the ecclesiastical habit and character. Both the one and the other were formerly a sort of asylum, where the impunity of the most flagitious crimes was almost assured. Is this privilege entirely abolished? We have frequently seen monks and priests thrown into prison; but we scarce have ever seen any of them taken out thence to be conveyed to the public place of execution.

What! because a man is obliged by his profession to have a peculiar sanctity of manners, shall he obtain privileges, and be treated with a commiseration that shall be refused to the criminal who is not bound by the same obligations? If it be urged, that there is a respect due to his functions, to his cloth, and to his character; we shall answer, that justice is equally and without distinction due to every citizen. If the sword of the law be not moved indiscriminately in every direction; if it should be unsteady; or if it should be raised or lowered in favour of any one it may meet with in its passage, that society is not well regulated. There exists in it, under another name, and under another form, a detestable privilege, a protection denied to some and reserved for others.

But these kinds of asylum, though generally contrary to the prosperity of societies, shall not here engage our attention. We shall only speak of those which temples or places of divine worship have afforded, and still continue to afford, in several parts of the globe.

These places of refuge were known to the ancients. In Greece, when that country was still but half civilized, it was thought that tyranny could not be restrained otherwise than by religion. The statues of Hercules, of Theseus, and of Pirithoüs, seemed well calculated to inspire villains with terror, when they had no longer the vengeance of these heroes to dread. But as soon as the asylum, instituted in favour of innocence, served only for the preservation of the guilty, and was made subservient either to the interests or

vanity of those who granted the protection, these places of retreat were abolished.

Other people, in imitation of the Greeks, established asylums. But the citizen used to put himself under the protection of the gods, merely to avoid the armed hand that pursued him. There, he called upon the law, and summoned the people to his assistance. His fellow-citizens, together with the magistrate, drew near, and the man was examined before them. If it was found that he had abused the asylum, he received a double punishment ; one for the crime he had committed, the other for having profaned the place in which he had taken refuge.

When Romulus wanted to people his city, he made an asylum of it ; and some temples, in the times of the republic, were devoted to this purpose. After the death of Julius Cæsar, the triumvirate made an asylum of his chapel. In after ages, the servility of the people frequently erected the statues of tyrants into places of refuge. From thence it was that the slave insulted his master ; and that the disturber of public tranquillity stirred up the populace against good men.

This horrible institution of barbarism and paganism occasioned inexpressible evils ; when christianity, ascending the throne of the empire, did not scruple to adopt and even to extend it. The consequences of this ecclesiastical policy were soon severely felt. The laws lost their authority, and the order of society was subverted. The magistrate then attacked these asylums with courage ; the priest defended them with obstinacy. A warm contest was carried on for many centuries with great animosity. The party that prevailed under the reign of a firm prince, was depressed under that of a superstitious one. Sometimes this asylum was general, and sometimes was under restrictions. It was annihilated at one period, and restored at another.

In an institution so evidently contrary to natural equity, to civil law, to the sanctity of religion, to the spirit of the gospel, and to the good order of society, the circumstances that should naturally tend most to astonish us are, its duration, the diversity of the objects of the edicts of the emperors, the contradiction of the canons, and the obstinacy of several bishops ; but more especially the extravagant absur-

dity of the lawyers, in determining, with precision, the extent of the asylum, according to the size or title of the respective churches. If it was a great church, the asylum was to extend to a certain number of feet beyond its circumference; if a small church, it was to be less extensive, and still less if it was a chapel: the protection was the same, whether the church were consecrated or not.

It is very extraordinary, that in a long succession of generations, not one monarch, not one ecclesiastic, not one magistrate, not even one single man should have reminded his contemporaries of the bright days of christianity. Formerly, he might have said to them, the sinner was detained for years at the gate of the temple, where he expiated his fault, exposed to the injuries of the air, in the presence of all his brethren, and of all the citizens. He was not allowed to enter the church, except by degrees; nor to approach the sanctuary, but in proportion as his penance drew near to an end. And in our days, a villain, an extortioner, a thief, and an assassin covered with blood, not only finds the gates of our temples open to him, but also meets with protection, impunity, food, and security.

But if the assassin had plunged his dagger into the breast of a citizen, even upon the steps of the altar, what must be done in that case? Shall the place of the bloody scene become his asylum? This would certainly be a privilege very convenient for criminals. Why should they murder in the streets, in the houses, or upon the highways, where they may be seized? should they not rather choose to assassinate in the churches? There never was a more disgusting instance of the contempt of the laws, and of the ambition of the clergy, than this immunity granted by the churches. It was reserved to superstition to make the Supreme Being, in this world, the protector of the same crimes which he punishes in another with eternal sufferings. Let us hope that the extremity of the evil will point out more sensibly the necessity of the remedy.

This fortunate revolution will be brought about later at other places than at Mexico, where the people are plunged in a state of still more profound ignorance than in the other regions subject to Castile. In 1732, the conspiring elements swallowed up one of the richest fleets that had ever been dispatched from this opulent part of the New World.

Universal despair prevailed in the two hemispheres. Amongst a people plunged in superstition, all events are miraculous ; and the anger of heaven was generally considered as the sole cause of this great disaster, which might very possibly have been brought about by the inexperience of the pilot, or by other causes equally natural. An *auto da fe* appeared to be the surest method of recovering the divine favour ; and thirty-eight wretched people perished in the flames, the victims of so deplorable an infatuation.

Methinks I am present at this horrible expiation. I behold it, and exclaim ; “ stop, execrable monsters ! What connection is there between the calamity you have experienced and the pretended or real crime of those whom you detain in your prisons ? If they entertain opinions which render them odious to the Almighty, it belongs to him to crush them with his thunder. He hath borne with them for a great number of years, and still continues to bear with them, and yet you torment them. If it were his will to condemn them to eternal punishments on the terrible day of his vengeance, does it belong to you to accelerate their chastisement ! Why should you deprive them of the instant of repentance, which perhaps awaits them, in the decline of life, in the hour of danger, or the period of sickness ? But infamous wretches as ye are, dissolute priests, and libidinous monks, were not your crimes sufficient to stir up the anger of heaven ? Correct yourselves ; prostrate yourselves at the foot of the altars, cover yourselves with sackcloth and ashes ; implore the mercy of the Most High, rather than employ yourselves in leading to the stake a number of innocent persons, whose death, far from wiping away your crimes, will only increase the number of them, by thirty-eight more, for which you will never be forgiven. To appease the Deity, ye burn mankind ! Are ye worshippers of Moloch ? ” But ye hear me not ; and the unfortunate victims of your superstitious cruelty are already cast into the flames.

Soon after this, the New Mexico, which was bordering and dependent upon the Old, was afflicted with a calamity of another kind. This vast region, situated, for the most part, under the temperate zone, was for a time unknown to the ravagers of America. The missionary Ruys first pe-

netrated into it in 1580. He was soon after followed by the captain Espajo, and, lastly, by John d'Onaste ; who by a series of labours begun in 1599, and terminated in 1611, succeeded in opening some mines, in multiplying cattle and means of subsistence, and in settling firmly the Spanish dominion. The order he had established was disturbed in 1652 by civil commotions. In the course of these animosities, Rosas the commandant was assassinated ; and his friends, who attempted to avenge his death, perished after him. These acts of violence continued till the tardy arrival of Pagnaloffe. This intrepid and severe commander had almost stifled the rebellion, when, in a transport of just indignation, he gave a blow to a turbulent monk, who was speaking to him in an insolent manner, and even dared to threaten him. The priests, who were masters of the country, immediately seized upon his person. He was excommunicated, delivered up to the inquisition, and sentenced to considerable fines. In vain did he urge the court to avenge the royal authority insulted in his person ; the influence of his enemies prevailed over his solicitations. Their rage and their power made him even apprehend a more fatal destiny ; and in order to avoid their daggers, and to withdraw himself from their intrigues, he took refuge in England, abandoning the reins of government to whoever would or could get hold of them. His flight plunged the province into fresh misfortunes ; and it was not till after ten years of anarchy and carnage, that every thing was brought again into order and subjection.

Can any thing be more absurd than this authority of the monks in America ? They are a set of men without knowledge and without principles : their independence tramples upon their institutions, and makes them regardless of their vows ; their conduct is scandalous, their houses are so many places of evil resort, and their tribunals of penance so many trading shops. From thence it is, that for a piece of money they quiet the conscience of the villain ; from thence it is, that they insinuate corruption into innocent minds, and that they seduce women and girls into debauchery : they are a set of simonists, who make a public traffic of holy things. The christianity they teach, is defiled with all sorts of absurdities. Greedy of inheritancy, they defraud, rob, and perjure themselves. They degrade the ma-

gistrates, and thwart them in their operations. There are no crimes which they cannot commit with impunity. They inspire the people with a spirit of rebellion. They are so many encouragers of superstition, and the cause of all the troubles that have agitated these distant regions. As long as they exist there they will keep up anarchy, from the confidence, as blind as it is unlimited, which they have obtained of the people, and from the pusillanimity with which they have inspired the depositaries of the authority, whom they dispose of at pleasure by their intrigues. Let us therefore enquire of what great utility they are. Are they informers? A wise administration hath no need of them. Are they to be managed as a counterpoise to the power of the viceroy? This is an idle apprehension. Are they tributaries of the great? This is an evil that must be put a stop to. Under whatever aspect we consider matters, the monks are a set of wretches, who scandalize and disturb Mexico too much to be allowed to remain there any longer.

Subjection and order were again disturbed, and more generally so in 1593, by a law which forbade the Indians the use of strong liquors. This prohibition could not have for its object the liquors of Europe, which were necessarily too high priced ever to be used by men living in a constant state of oppression, and incessantly stripped of their property. It was only from the palm wine that the government endeavoured to wean them.

This liquor is drawn from a plant known at Mexico by the name of maguey, and resembling the aloes in its form. Its leaves, collected about the neck of the root, are thick, pulpy, almost straight, several feet in length, hollowed in the form of a gutter, thorny on the back, and terminated by a very sharp point. The stem, which rises out of this tuft, ascends to twice its height, and bears upon its branching top yellowish flowers. Their calix, with six divisions, is charged with an equal number of stamina. It adheres at the bottom to the pistil, which, together with it, becomes a capsula with three cells filled with seeds. The maguey grows in every part of Mexico, and is easily multiplied from slips. Hedges are made of it. Its several parts have each of them their utility. The roots are employed for cordage; the stems furnish wood; the points of the leaves

serve for nails, or needles ; and even the leaves themselves are fit for thatching the roofs ; and a thread is produced from them fit for the manufacture of various looms.

But the most esteemed produce of the maguey is a sweet and clear water, which is collected by means of a hole made with an instrument in the middle of the tuft, after the shoots and the inward leaves are removed. This hole, which is three or four inches deep, is filled and emptied every day ; and the liquor continues running in this manner for a whole year, sometimes even for eighteen months. This liquor, when inspissated, forms a real sugar ; but when mixed with spring water, and laid by in vases, it acquires, after having fermented four or five days, the sharpness of cyder, and almost the same kind of taste. If orange or lemon peel be added to it, it becomes intoxicating. This property renders it still more agreeable to the Mexicans, who not being able to console themselves for the loss of their liberty, endeavour to forget the humiliating state of their slavery. Accordingly, the attention of the Indians is continually turned towards the houses where this liquor is distributed. They pass whole days and weeks there ; they leave the subsistence of their families in them, and very frequently the few clothes they have.

The Spanish ministry, informed of these excesses, wished to put a stop to them ; but did not set about it in a proper manner. Instead of bringing back the people to good morals by paternal cares, and by the most effectual mode of instruction, they had recourse to the fatal expedient of prohibitions. The minds of men grew heated, seditions were multiplied, and acts of violence repeated, from one extremity of the empire to the other. The government was obliged to give way ; and withdrew these prohibitive acts : but to indemnify itself for the sacrifice of its authority, taxes were laid upon this liquor, which bring in annually to the treasury eleven or twelve thousand livres from 458l. 6s. 8d. to 500l.

Five and twenty or thirty years after this, a new scene of a particular kind was opened at Mexico. In this important possession, the police was so much neglected, that all the roads were seized upon by a numerous band of robbers. No citizen could venture to go out of his house without a passport from the chiefs of these banditti. Whe-

ther from carelessness, weakness, or corruption, the magistrate took no measures to put an end to so great a calamity. At length, the court of Madrid, roused by the clamours of a whole nation, committed the care of the public security to Velásques. This equitable, firm, and strict man, independent of the tribunals and the viceroy, succeeded at length in re-establishing order, and fixing it upon so firm a basis, that it hath never since been shaken.

A war undertaken against the people of Cinaloa, Sonora, and New Navarre, hath been the last remarkable event that hath disturbed the empire. These provinces, situated between Old and New Mexico, did not make a part of Montezuma's dominions. It was not till 1540, that the devastators of the New World penetrated into them, under the command of Vasques Coronado. They found there some petty nations, who, upon the borders of the sea, lived by fishing, and in the inland parts upon the produce of the chase; and who, when these means of subsistence failed them, had no other resource than in the spontaneous productions of nature. In these districts, neither clothing nor huts were in use. Branches of trees to shade them from the heats of a burning sun; and reeds tied together to shelter them from the torrents of rain: these were the only contrivances thought of by the inhabitants to guard against the inclemency of the seasons. During the severest frosts they slept in the open air, round the fires which they had kindled.

This country, in appearance so poor, contained mines, which some Spaniards undertook to work. They were found to yield plentifully; and yet the greedy proprietors of them did not enrich themselves. As it was necessary to bring from Vera Crux, upon the back of mules, through a difficult and dangerous road of six or seven hundred leagues, the quicksilver, the stuffs, and most of the articles required for subsistence and for the labours, all these objects, when they arrived at the spot, had increased so much in value, that the most fortunate undertaking scarce furnished a sufficiency to pay for them.

It became necessary to abandon the whole, or to take other measures; the last of these schemes was resolved upon. The jesuit Ferdinand Consang was commissioned, in 1746, to reconnoitre the gulf of California, which borders these

immense regions. After this navigation, conducted with skill, the court of Madrid became acquainted with the coasts of the continent, with the harbours that nature has formed there, with the sandy and arid places that are not susceptible of cultivation, and with the rivers, which, by the fertility they diffuse along their borders, invite to the establishing of colonies in those parts. Nothing, in future, could prevent the ships that sailed out of *Acapulco*, from entering the *Vermeil* sea; from conveying with ease into the neighbouring provinces, missionaries, troops, miners, provisions, merchandise, and every thing that was wanted for the colonies, and from returning laden with metals.

In the meanwhile, it was indispensably necessary previously to gain over the natives of the country by acts of humanity, or to subdue them by force of arms. But how was it possible to conciliate men who were to be used as beasts of burden, or to be buried alive within the bowels of the earth? Accordingly, the government resolved upon force; and war was deferred only from the incapacity in an exhausted treasury to bear the expence of it. At length, in 1768, a credit of twelve hundred thousand livres [50,000*l.*] was found, and hostilities commenced. Some hordes of savages submitted after a trifling resistance. This was not the case with the *Aplachians*, the most warlike of these nations, and the most eager for independence. They were pursued without intermission for three years, with a view of exterminating them. Great God! what an idea! To exterminate men! Could we say otherwise of wolves? Exterminate them, and for what? Because they were a high-minded people, and were sensible of the natural right they had to liberty; because they disdained to be slaves. And yet we call ourselves civilized people, and christians.

The distance of both the ancient and new conquests from the centre of authority, gave reason to think that they would be in a languid state, till they should be furnished with an independent administration. A particular commander was therefore given to them, who, with a title less pompous than that of viceroy of New Spain, enjoyed the same prerogatives.

*State of Mexico
under Spain.*

WE must now examine to what degree of prosperity Mexico hath risen, notwithstanding the enormous losses it has expe-

rienced from foreign enemies, and notwithstanding the domestic troubles with which it hath so frequently been agitated.

The largest of the Cordeleirias mountains, after having crossed all South America, becomes lower and narrower in the isthmus of Panama ; continues in the same form through the provinces of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala ; spreads itself and rises again throughout the rest of Mexico, but without ever approaching to that prodigious height which it hath in Peru. This alteration is more particularly remarkable towards the South sea. The shores here are extremely deep, and no bottom is to be found except very near the land ; while in the Northern sea, it is found at a great distance from the continent. Accordingly, the roads are as good and as frequent in the first of these seas, as they are scarce and bad in the other.

The climate of a region situated almost entirely in the torrid zone, is alternately damp and hot. These variations are more perceptible and more common in the low, marshy, woody, and uncultivated districts of the east, than in those parts of the empire, which beneficent nature hath treated more favourably.

The quality of the soil is also very different. Sometimes it is barren, sometimes fertile, according as it is mountainous, level, or sunk under the waters.

No sooner were the Spaniards masters of this opulent and immense country, than they hastened to build cities upon it, in those places which appeared to them best calculated for the maintenance of their authority, and in those which promised them greater advantages from their conquest. Such of the Europeans as chose to fix there, obtained a sufficient extent of territory ; but they were obliged to search for planters, whom the law did not allow them.

Another arrangement of things was observed in the country places. They were most of them distributed to the conquerors in reward of their blood or their services. The extent of these domains, which were only granted for two or three generations, was proportioned to rank and favour. A greater or less number of Mexicans were attached to them as vassals. Cortez had three and twenty thousand of them in the provinces of Mexico, Tlascala, Mechoacan,

and Oaxaca, but with this distinction, that they were to belong to his family in perpetuity. Oppression must have been less severe in these hereditary possessions than in the rest of the empire, since in 1746 fifteen thousand nine hundred and forty Indians were still reckoned there, with eighteen hundred Spaniards, mestees, or mulattoes, and sixteen hundred negro slaves.

The country had none of the animals necessary for the subsistence of its new inhabitants, for ploughing the lands and for the other wants inseparable from a mixed society. These things were all brought from the islands already subjected to Castile, which had themselves lately received them from our hemisphere. The animals propagated with incredible rapidity. But they all of them degenerated; and how indeed was it possible, that they should not have experienced very evident alterations, when they were weakened by crossing the seas, deprived of their ordinary food, and given up to the hands of persons who were incapable of rearing and taking care of them? The sheep were the most materially affected. Mendoza had some rams brought from Spain in order to renew the degenerated race; and since that period, the fleeces have been found of a sufficient good quality to supply materials for considerable manufactures.

The multiplication of the cattle brought on a great increase in the cultures. To the maize, which had always been the principal food of the Mexicans, the grains of our countries were added. At first they did not thrive. The seeds of them, thrown at hazard among the briars, did not at first yield any thing but thick and barren weeds. A vegetation too rapid, and too vigorous, did not allow them time to ripen, nor even to form themselves: but this superabundance of juices gradually diminished; and at length most of our seeds, vegetables, and fruits, were seen to prosper. If the vine and the olive tree were not naturalized in this part of the New World, this was owing to the prohibition of government, which intended to leave a mart open for the productions of the mother country. Perhaps the soil and the climate would themselves have rejected these precious plants; at least we have an authority for thinking so, when we see that the experiments which the jesuits and the heirs of Cortez were allowed to try, about

the year 1706, were not successful, and that those which have been since made, have not been much more so.

Cotton, tobacco, cocoa, sugar, and some other productions, were in general prosperous : but for want of hands or industry, these articles were confined to an inland circulation. There is nothing but jalap, vanilla, indigo, and cochineal, which constitutes the trade of New Spain with other nations.

JALAP is one of the purgatives of most frequent use in medicine. *Of the culture of jalap.* It derives its name from the town of Xalapa, in the environs of which it grows plentifully. Its root, which is the only part in use, is tuberosc, large, lengthened out into the form of a French turnip, white on the inside, and full of a milky juice. The plant which it produces, hath been for a long time unknown. At present, we are informed, that it is a species of convolvulus, resembling in its appearance that of our hedges. Its stem is climbing, angular, and covered with a slight down. Its leaves, alternately disposed, are rather large, downy on the upper side, and wrinkled on the under, and marked with seven costæ : they are sometimes entire and cordiform, sometimes divided into several lobes, more or less distinct. The flowers, which grow in clusters along the stem, have a calix, acorn-like at its base, deeply divided into five parts, and accompanied with two flowery leaves. The corolla, which is large and campaniform, whitish on the outside, and of a dark purple within, supports five white stamina of unequal length. The pistil, which is placed in the middle, and surmounted with a single style, becomes, as it ripens, a round capsula, inclosing in a single cell four seeds of a red colour, and very hairy.

This plant is not only found in the neighbourhood of Xalapa, but also among the sands of Vera Cruz. It is easily cultivated. The weight of the roots is from twelve to twenty pounds. They are cut into slices, in order to dry them. They then acquire a brown colour, and a resinous appearance. The taste of them is rather acrid, and excites a nausea. The best jalap is close, resinous, brown, not easily broken, and inflammable. It is given only in small doses, because it is an active and violent purgative. Its re-

finous extract, made with spirits of wine, is employed for the same purposes, but with still greater caution. There are seven thousand five hundred quintals of this root consumed annually in Europe, which cost 972,000 livres [40,541l. 13s. 4d.]

*Of the culture
of the vanilla.*

THE vanilla is a plant which, like the ivy, grows to the trees it meets with, covers them almost entirely, and raises itself by their aid. Its stem, of the thickness of the little finger, is greenish, fleshy, almost cylindrical, knotty at intervals, and samentose, as that of the vine. Each knot is furnished with an alternate leaf, rather thick, of an oval shape, eight inches long and three broad. It also pushes forth roots, which, penetrating the barks of the trees, extracts a sufficient degree of nourishment from them to support the plant for some time in vigour, when by accident the bottom of the stem happens to be damaged, or even separated from the principal root. This stem, when grown to a certain height, branches out, spreads sideways, and is covered with clusters of flowers, rather large, white on the inside, and greenish without. Five of the divisions of their calix are long, narrow, and undulated. The sixth, which is more internal, appears in the form of a horn. The pistil, which they crown, supports a single stamina. It becomes, as it ripens, a fleshy fruit, formed like a pod, of seven or eight inches long, which opens into three valves loaded with small seeds.

This plant grows naturally in uncultivated lands that are always damp, sometimes under water, and covered with large trees; from whence it may be inferred, that such a kind of soil is the fittest for its cultivation. In order to multiply it, it is sufficient to plant at the foot of the trees some branches or twigs, which take root and rise up in a short time. Some cultivators, in order to preserve their plants from rotting, prefer the fastening of them to trees, even at the height of a foot from the ground. These plants soon throw out filaments, which descending in a straight line, penetrate into the earth, and form roots there.

The season for gathering the pods begins towards the end of September, and lasts about three months. The aromatic that is peculiar to them cannot be obtained without

preparation. This preparation consists in threading several pods, and dipping them for a moment in a caldron of boiling water to whiten them. They are afterwards suspended in a place exposed to the open air and to the rays of the sun. A thick and plentiful liquor then distils from their extremity, the exit of which is facilitated by a slight pressure, repeated two or three times in the course of the day. In order to retard the drying, which ought to go on slowly, they are rubbed over at several different times with oil, which preserves their suppleness, and keeps them from insects. They are also tied round with a cotton thread to prevent them from opening. When they are sufficiently dried, they are rubbed in hands anointed with oil, and they are put into a pot that is varnished, in order to keep them fresh.

This is all that is known of the vanilla, which is particularly appropriated to perfume chocolate; the use of which has passed from the Mexicans to the Spaniards, and from them to other nations; and even this information, which we have obtained concerning it, is entirely modern, and owing to a French naturalist. It is not possible, that the masters of this part of the New World, notwithstanding the indifference they have hitherto shewn for the history of nature, should not have better information upon this matter. If they have not communicated it, it is because they have been desirous of reserving this production exclusively to themselves, although only fifty quintals of it are annually brought to Europe, where they are not sold for more than 431,568 livres [17,982l.] The time will come when this matter shall be brought to light, and then the vanilla will be as generally known as the indigo is at present.

THE indigo tree is a straight and rather bushy plant. From its root arises a ligneous brittle stem, of the height of two feet, branching from the beginning, white on the inside, and covered with a greyish bark. The leaves are alternate, composed of several small leaves disposed in two rows along a common costa, which is terminated by a single foliolum, and furnished at its basis with two small membranes which are called stipulæ. At the extremity of each branch arise clusters of reddish, papilionaceous flowers,

*Of the culture
of the indigo
tree.*

rather small, and composed of a number of petals. The stamina, to the number of six, and the pistil, surmounted with a single style, are arranged as they are in most of the herbaceous flowers. The pistil is changed into a small rounded pod, slightly curved, one inch in length, and a line and a half in breadth, full of cylindrical, shining, and brownish seeds.

This plant requires a light soil, well tilled, and never deluged with water. For this reason, spots are preferred which are sloping, because this position preserves the indigo plant from the stagnation of the rain, which might destroy it, and from inundations, that might cover it with a prejudicial slime. Low and flat grounds may also be employed for this culture, if channels and ditches are made to draw off the waters, and if care be taken to plant them only after the rainy season, which often occasions overflowings. The seed is sown in little furrows made by the hoe, two or three inches in depth, at the distance of a foot from each other, and in as straight a line as possible. Continual attention is required to pluck up the weeds, which would soon choke the plant. Though it may be sown in all seasons, the spring is commonly preferred. Moisture causes this plant to shoot above the surface in three or four days. It is ripe at the end of two months. When it begins to flower, it is cut with pruning-knives; and cut again at the end of every six weeks, if the weather be a little rainy. It lasts about two years, after which term it degenerates; it is then plucked up, and planted afresh.

As this plant soon exhausts the soil, because it does not absorb a sufficient quantity of air and dew to moisten the earth, it is of advantage to the planter to have a vast space which may remain covered with trees, till it becomes necessary to fell them, in order to make room for the indigo; for trees are to be considered as syphons, by means of which the earth and air reciprocally communicate to each other their fluid and vegetating substance; syphons, into which the vapours and the juices being alternately drawn up, are kept in equilibrium. Thus while the sap ascends by the roots to the branches, the leaves draw in the air and vapours, which circulating through the fibres of the tree descend again into the earth, and restore to it in dew what it loses in sap. It is in order to maintain this reciprocal in-

fluence, that when there are no trees to preserve the fields in a proper state for the sowing of indigo, it is customary to cover those which are exhausted by this plant with potatoes or lianes, the creeping branches of which preserve the freshness of the earth, while the leaves, when burnt, renew its fertility.

Indigo is distinguished into several species, of which only two are cultivated: the true indigo, which is the sort we have been speaking of, and the bastard indigo, which differs from the former, in having a much higher, more woody, and more durable stem; in having its foliola longer and narrower, its pods more curved, and its seeds black. Though the first be sold at a higher price, it is usually advantageous to cultivate the other; because it is not so frequently renewed, is heavier, and yields more leaves, the produce of which is, however, less, from an unequal quantity. The first will grow in many different soils: the second succeeds best in those which are most exposed to the rain. Both are liable to great accidents in their early state. They are sometimes burnt up by the heat of the sun, or choked by a web with which they are surrounded by an insect peculiar to these regions. Sometimes the plant becomes dry, and is destroyed by another very common insect; at other times, the leaves, which are the valuable part of the plant, are devoured in the space of twenty-four hours by caterpillars. This last misfortune, which is but too common, hath given occasion to the saying, that the planters of indigo went to bed rich, and rose in the morning totally ruined.

This production ought to be gathered in with great precaution, for fear of making the farina that lies on the leaves, and which is very valuable, fall off by shaking it. When gathered, it is thrown into the steeping vat, which is a large tub filled with water. Here it undergoes a fermentation, which in twenty-four hours at farthest is completed. A cock is then turned, to let the water run into the second tub, called the mortar or pounding-tub. The steeping-vat is then cleaned out, that fresh plants may be thrown in; and thus the work is continued without interruption.

The water which hath run into the pounding-tub, is found impregnated with a very subtil earth, which alone constitutes the dregs or blue substance that is the object of

this process, and which must be separated from the useless salt of the plant, because this makes the dregs swim on the surface. To effect this, the water is forcibly agitated with wooden buckets that are full of holes, and fixed to a long handle. This part of the process requires the greatest precautions. If the agitation be discontinued too soon, the part that is used in dying, not being sufficiently separated from the salt, would be lost. If, on the other hand, the dye were to be agitated too long after the complete separation, the parts would be brought together again, and form a new combination; and the salt re-acting on the dregs would excite a second fermentation, that would alter the dye, spoil its colour, and make what is called burnt indigo. These accidents are prevented by a close attention to the least alterations that the dye undergoes, and by the precaution which the workmen take to draw out a little of it from time to time in a clean vessel. When they perceive that the coloured particles collect by separating from the rest of the liquor, they leave off shaking the buckets, in order to allow time to the blue dregs to precipitate to the bottom of the tub, where they are left to settle till the water is quite clear. Holes made in the tub at different heights are then opened one after another, and this useless water is let out.

The blue dregs remaining at the bottom having acquired the consistence of a thick muddy liquid, cocks are then opened, which draw it off into the settler. After it is still more cleared of much superfluous water in this third and last tub, it is drained into sacks; from whence, when water no longer filters through the cloth, this matter, now become of a thicker consistence, is put into chests, where it entirely loses its moisture. At the end of three months the indigo is fit for sale.

It is used in washing to give a bluish colour to linen: painters also employ it in their water colours; and dyers cannot make fine blue without indigo. The ancients procured it from the East Indies; in modern times it has been transplanted into America. The cultivation of it, successively attempted at different places, appears to be fixed at Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, San Domingo, and Mexico. This last sort, which is the most esteemed, is known by the name of Guatimala indigo, because it grows

upon the district of that famous city. The manner in which it is procured is worthy of remark.

In these beautiful countries, where every estate is from fifteen to twenty leagues in extent, a part of this large space is annually devoted to the culture of indigo. For this purpose it is sufficient to burn the shrubs which cover the grounds, and carelessly to pass the plough once over them. This is done in the month of March, a season in which it very seldom rains in this delightful climate. A man on horseback then scatters the seed of the plant, in the same manner as we sow corn in Europe. No one then pays any attention to this valuable production, till the time of gathering it.

From hence it happens that the indigo grows in some places and not in others; and that the indigo which does not rise, is frequently choked by the weeds, from which it might have been preserved by pulling them up frequently. Accordingly, the Spaniards gather less indigo from an extent of three or four leagues, than other nations do from a few acres of land carefully managed; and their indigo, though much superior to any other, is not yet so perfect as it might be. Europe receives annually six thousand quintals of it, which cost 7,626,960 livres [317,790*l.*]

This prosperity would infallibly increase, if the court of Madrid were to enable the natives to cultivate indigo on their own account. This personal interest, thus substituted to a foreign one, would render them more active and more intelligent; and it is probable that the abundance and superiority of the Mexican indigo, would in time exclude that of the other colonies from all the markets.

THE cochineal, to which we owe our beautiful scarlet and purple colours, has not yet been found anywhere but in Mexico. I had asserted, from the testimony even of the best writers, that the nature of this colour was not known before the beginning of this century. Upon searching into the originals, I find, that Acosta, in 1530, and Herrera, in 1601, had described it, as well as our modern naturalists. I therefore retract, and wish I could have an opportunity of doing the same with regard to many other things I have written of the Spaniards. The ignorance of travellers, and

Of the culture of the cochineal.

the levity with which they consider the productions of nature in all its kingdoms, is the reason that natural history is so full of fallacies, which pass from one work to another, and which are transmitted from age to age by authors who successively copy each other. We scarce give ourselves the trouble to examine what we think we are well acquainted with; and thus it is, that after having propagated error, the testimonies which delay inquiries prolong the duration of it still more. Another inconvenience arising from this is, that philosophers lose time, which is precious, in forming systems which impose upon us, till the pretended facts upon which they were founded have been shewn to be false.

The cochineal is an insect of the size and form of a bug. The two sexes are distinct as in most other animals. The female, fixed upon a point of the plant, almost from the first instant of its birth, remains always attached to it by a kind of trunk, and presents to the eye only an hemispherical crust, which covers all the other parts. This covering is changed twice in twenty-five days, and is sprinkled over with a white and thick dust, which is immiscible with water. At this period, which is that of puberty, the male, which is much smaller, and more slightly made, issues out of a farinaceous tube, by means of wings with which he is provided. He flutters over the immoveable females, and fixes upon each of them. The same female is thus visited by several males, who perish soon after fecundation. The bulk of the female visibly enlarges, till a drop of liquid, which escapes from under her, shews that the eggs, which are in great number, will soon make their appearance. The little insects burst their covering at the time of their birth, and soon spread themselves over the plant, to choose a favourable spot to fix upon. They particularly endeavour to shelter themselves from the east wind. Accordingly, the shrub upon which they live, when viewed on that side, appears quite green, while upon the opposite side, which the insects have preferred, it is white.

This shrub, which is known by the name of nopal, or Indian fig, is about five feet high. Its stem is fleshy, large, flattened, downy, a little rough, and covered with clusters of thorns, regularly disposed upon its surface. Its branches out very much, and grows narrow, as well as its branches,

at every point of ramification: this gives to each portion of the plant thus made narrow, the form of an oval, thick, and thorny leaf. It hath no other leaves but these. Its flowers, scattered over the young stems, are composed of a scaly calix which supports several petals and stamina. The pistil, surmounted with a single style, and concealed at the bottom of the calix, grows along with it into a fruit that is fit for eating; it resembles a fig, and is full of seeds, fixed in a kind of reddish pulp.

There are several species of nopal. Those which have a smooth stem, with a number of thorns placed too close to each other, are not fit for the breeding of the cochineal. These insects thrive well only on that sort which hath few thorns, and a downy surface proper to give them a firmer footing. Wind and cold rain, as well as too much damp, are injurious to the plant. The mode of lopping the trees is not advantageous. It is better to replant it every six years, by putting several pieces of the stems into cavities of some depth, disposed in a quincunx, or a square, at the distance of six or eight feet from each other. A spot thus planted, and distinguished by the name of *nopalry*, is usually no more than one or two acres in extent, seldom three. Each acre produces as much as two quintals of cochineal, and one man is sufficient to cultivate it; he must weed frequently, but with precaution, in order not to disturb the insect, which would not survive if it were displaced. The cultivator must also take care to get rid of the animals that would destroy the plant; the most formidable of which is a caterpillar, which makes its way even through the inside of the plant, and attacks the insect underneath.

Eighteen months after the plantation, the nopal is covered with cochineals; but in order to distribute them more regularly over the whole plant, and to prevent them from injuring each other, from their proximity, small nests, made of the outside rind of the cocoa, open to the west, and filled with twelve or fifteen females ready to lay their eggs, are fixed to spines at certain distances. The little ones which come out, fix themselves on the nopal, and attain to their utmost growth in two months, which is the limited duration of their life. They are then gathered; and this operation is renewed every two months from October to May. The crop may be less valuable if it should be mixed

with another kind of cochineal of a lower price, or if there be a great quantity of males, which are in little estimation, because they are less, and that they fall off before the time. This crop is to be gathered some days before the laying of the eggs, either to prevent the loss of the eggs, which are rich in colour, or to hinder the little ones from fixing upon a plant which is already exhausted, and must be left to itself for a few months. Beginning then by the bottom of the plant, the cochineals are successively detached with a knife, and are made to fall into a basin placed underneath, one of the edges of which being flattened, adapts itself exactly to the plant, which is afterwards cleaned with the same knife, or with a cloth.

Immediately before the rainy season comes on, in order to prevent the total destruction of the cochineals, which might be occasioned by the unwholesomeness of the air, the branches of the nopal, loaded with infant insects, are cut off. These branches are laid up in the houses, where they maintain their freshness, as all mucilaginous plants do. Here the cochineals thrive during the bad season. As soon as that is passed, they are placed on the trees, where the vivifying freshness of the air soon makes them propagate.

The wild cochineal, a different species from the fine, or mesteque cochineal, we have been speaking of, but cultivated in the same places, and on the same plant, does not require as much care and precaution; it is a more hardy insect, and bears the injuries of the air better. The crop of it is consequently less variable in the produce, and may be gathered all the year. This insect differs from the other, inasmuch as it is more voracious, less abounding in colour, and enveloped in a kind of cotton, which it extends two lines all round it. This species multiplies more readily, spreads further and faster without any assistance; so that a nopalry is soon covered with them. As its produce is more certain, as its price is equivalent to two thirds of that of the finer sort, and as it propagates upon all the species of nopal, it may be cultivated with success, but separately; because, if it were placed near the other, it would starve it, and the other might also be smothered under the down. This species is also found in Peru, upon a very prickly nopal, which is extremely common there.

As soon as the cochineals are gathered, they are plunged

in hot water to kill them. There are different ways of drying them. The best is, to expose them to the sun for several days, by which means they acquire a red brown colour, which the Spaniards call *renegrida*. The second method is to put them in an oven, where they assume a greyish colour streaked with veins of purple, which hath given them the name of *jaspada*. But the most imperfect, which is what the Indians most generally practise, consists in putting them on plates along with their cakes of maize: in which process they are frequently burnt, and are called *negra*.

Though the cochineal be classed in the animal kingdom, the species of all others the most likely to corrupt, yet it never spoils. Without any other care than merely that of keeping it in a box, it hath been preserved in all its virtue for ages.

This valuable production would probably succeed in different parts of Mexico: but hitherto scarce any beside the province of Oaxaca hath seriously attended to it. The crops have been more plentiful upon a barren soil, which is beneficial to the nopal, than upon a soil naturally fertile; they have experienced less accidents in an agreeably mild exposure, than in places where the heat and cold were more sensibly felt. The Mexicans were acquainted with the cochineal before the destruction of their empire. They made use of it to paint their houses, and to dye their cotton. We read in Herrera, that, as early as the year 1523, the ministry sent orders to Cortez to encourage the cultivation of it. The conquerors rejected this kind of labour, as they despised every other, and it was consigned entirely to the Indians. They are the only persons who still carry it on; though too frequently with funds advanced by the Spaniards, upon terms more or less usurious. The produce of their industry is all conveyed to the capital of the province, which is likewise named Oaxaca.

This town, to which there are beautiful roads leading up, and where a perpetual spring prevails, rises in the midst of a spacious plain, covered with agreeable hamlets and well cultivated. The streets are wide, run in a straight line, and consist of houses that are rather low, but constructed in a pleasing manner. The squares, the aqueduct, and the public edifices, are executed in a good taste. There are some

manufactures of silk and cotton ; and the merchandize of Asia and of Europe is in general use. We have an opportunity of seeing several travellers, whom particular circumstances had led to Oaxaca. They have uniformly assured us, that of all the settlements formed by the Spaniards in the New World, this was the one in which the spirit of society had made the greatest progress. These several advantages appear to be the result of the cochineal trade.

Exclusive of what is consumed by America and the Philippines, Europe receives annually four thousand quintals of fine cochineal, two hundred quintals of granilla, a hundred quintals of cochineal dust, and three hundred quintals of the wild cochineal, which, when brought into its ports, are sold for 8,610,140 livres [358,755l. 16s. 3d.]

This rich article hath been hitherto cultivated only for the profit of Spain. M. Thierry, a French botanist, in defiance of more dangers than can be imagined, hath taken it away from Oaxaca itself, and transplanted it to San Domingo, where he cultivates it with a degree of perseverance worthy of the courage which animated him in obtaining it. His first attempts have succeeded beyond his expectations, and there is every reason to hope that the sequel will answer to this fortunate beginning. May this species of cultivation, as well as others, extend itself still further, and engage the attention of other nations ! Are we not all brethren, all children of one common father, and are we not all called to fulfil the same destiny ? Is it necessary that I should thwart the prosperity of my fellow creature, because nature hath placed a river or a mountain between him and me ? Doth this barrier authorise me to hate and to persecute him ? How many calamities hath this exclusive predilection for particular societies brought upon the globe, and how may more will it still occasion in future, unless sound philosophy should at length enlighten the minds of men, too long beguiled by factitious sentiments ? My voice is certainly too feeble to dissipate the delusion. But some writers will undoubtedly arise, whose reasoning and eloquence will, sooner or later, persuade future generations, that mankind is of greater concern to us than one's country ; or rather, that the felicity of the one is intimately connected with the happiness of the other.

To the great exportations we have been mentioning, we

must add the following articles that are sent from Mexico : ten thousand three hundred and fifty quintals of logwood, which produce 112,428 livres [4684l. 10s.] three hundred and ten quintals of a species of Brasil wood, which produce 4266 livres [177l. 15s.] forty-seven quintals of carmine, which produce 81,000 livres [3375l.] six quintals of tortoise-shell, which produce 24,300 livres [1012l. 10s.] forty-seven quintals of aronotto, which produce 21,600 livres [900l.] thirty quintals of sarfaparilla, which produce 4147 livres [172l. 15s. 10d.] forty-four quintals of balsam, which produce 45,920 livres [1913l. 6s. 8d.] five quintals of dragons' blood, which produce 270 livres [11l. 5s.] and one hundred hides with the hair on, which produce 1620 livres [67l. 10s.]

But, as if nature had not yet done enough for Spain, in granting to her, almost gratuitously, all the treasures of the earth, which other nations cannot obtain without the hardest labour, she hath also bestowed upon her, especially at Mexico, gold and silver, which are the vehicle or representative of every produce.

SUCH is the dominion which these shining and fatal metals have over us, that they have counterbalanced the infamy and execration which the plunderers of America justly deserved. The names of Mexico, Peru, and Potosi, no longer make us shudder ; and yet we are men ! Even at this day, when the spirit of justice and the sentiments of humanity are inculcated in all our writings, and are become the invariable rule of our judgments ; a navigator, who should come into our ports with a vessel laden with riches avowedly obtained by methods equally barbarous, would land amidst the general acclamations of the multitude. Where is then that wisdom, which is so much the boast of the present age ? What is then that gold, which removes from us the idea of vice, and prevents us from feeling that sense of horror which the shedding of blood naturally impresses us with : There are undoubtedly some advantages annexed to a medium of exchange between nations, to an external representation of all sorts of value, to a common estimate of all labours. But would not greater advantages have been obtained, if nations had continued in a state of tranquillity, detached

*Of the working
of the mines.*

from each other, ignorant and hospitable, than thus to have become corrupted with the most ferocious of all passions?

The origin of metals hath not always been well understood. It was long thought that they were as old as the creation. It is now believed, with greater reason, that they are formed successively. In fact, it is impossible to doubt, that nature is continually in action, and that she exerts herself with as much power in the bowels of the earth as in the regions of the sky.

Every metal, according to the chemists, hath for its principle an earth which constitutes and is peculiar to it. It presents itself to us, sometimes in the form that characterizes it, and sometimes under various appearances, when it requires a degree of habit and skill to recognize it. In the first case it is called native, in the second mineralized, ore.

Metals, whether native or mineralized, are sometimes scattered by fragments in beds of earth that are horizontal or inclined. But this is not the place of their origin. They have been conveyed thither by great volcanoes, floods, and earthquakes, which are continually subverting our miserable planet. They are commonly found, sometimes in regular veins, and sometimes in detached masses, within the rocks and mountains where they are formed.

According to the conjectures of naturalists, from these large caverns which are perpetually heated there arise continual exhalations. These sulphureous and saline liquors act on the metallic particles, attenuate and divide them, and put them in motion within the cavities of the earth. They unite again; and then, becoming too heavy to support themselves in the air, they fall, and are heaped up one upon another. If, in their several motions, they have not met with other bodies, they form pure metals; which they do not, if they happen to have been combined with foreign substances.

Nature, which seems to have intended to conceal these metals, hath not been able to secrete them from the avidity of man. From repeated observations, we are led to discover the places where there are mines. They are usually found in mountains, where plants grow with difficulty, and soon fade: where trees are small and crooked; where the moisture of dews, rains, and even snows, is soon dried

up; where sulphureous and mineral exhalations arise; where the waters are impregnated with vitriolic salts; and where the sands contain metallic particles. Though each of these marks, separately considered, be ambiguous, it seldom happens, when all of them are united, but that the earth contains some mine.

But what are the terms on which we extract this treasure or this poison from those caverns where nature had concealed it? We must pierce rocks to an immense depth; we must dig subterraneous channels, to carry off the waters which flow in and menace us on every side; we must convey into immense galleries the wood of whole forests cut into props; we must support the vaults of these galleries against the enormous weight of the earth which perpetually tends to fill them up, and to bury in their ruins those avaricious and presumptuous men who constructed them; we must dig canals and aqueducts; we must invent hydraulic machines of astonishing and various powers, and all the several kinds of furnaces; we must hazard being suffocated or consumed by a vapour which takes fire from the glimmering flame of the lamps, without which the work could not be carried on; and we must at last perish by a consumption, which reduces human life to one half of its duration. If we consider how many observations, experiments, and trials, all these works imply, we shall carry the origin of the world far beyond its known antiquity. To shew us the gold, iron, copper, tin, and silver, used in the earliest ages, is to amuse us with an idle story which can only impose upon children.

When the labour of mineralogy is finished, that of metallurgy begins. Its object is to separate metals from each other, and to detach them from the extraneous bodies which envelop them.

In order to separate the gold from the stones which contain it, it is sufficient to break them in pieces and reduce them to powder. The matter thus pulverized is afterwards triturated with quicksilver, which combines itself to this precious metal, but without forming any union, either with the rock, or sand, or even the earth, which were mixed with it. By means of fire, the mercury is afterwards distilled, which, on separating, leaves the gold at the bottom of the vessel in the state of a powder, which is purified in

the coppel. Native silver requires no other preparations.

But when silver is combined with other substances, or with metals of a different nature, great knowledge and consummate experience are requisite to purify it. Every circumstance authorises us to think that this art is unknown in the New World. It is also generally acknowledged, that the miners of Germany and Sweden would find, in a mine that hath already been worked, more wealth than the Spaniard had been able to extract from it. They would enrich themselves by mines, which, through want of skill, have been rejected as insufficient to defray the expences of working them.

Before the arrival of the Castilians, the Mexicans had no gold except what the torrents detached from the mountains; they had still less silver, because the chances that that might bring it into their hands were infinitely less frequent. These metals were not employed by them as a medium of exchange, but only as objects of ornament, or of mere curiosity. They were little attached to them. Accordingly, they lavished the small quantity they had of them upon a foreign people, who made them their idol; and they cast it at the feet of their horses, who, while they were chewing the bit, seemed as if they were feeding upon them. But when hostilities had commenced between the two nations, and in proportion as the animosities increased, these perfidious treasures were partly thrown into the lakes and rivers, in order to deprive an implacable enemy of them, who seemed to have crossed so many seas for no other purpose than to obtain the possession of them. It was particularly in the capital and its neighbourhood that this practice was adopted. After the empire was subdued, the conquerors went all over it, in order to satisfy their ruling passion. The temples, the palaces, the private houses, and even the meanest hovels, were ransacked and pillaged. This source being exhausted, it became necessary to have recourse to the mines.

Those from which the greatest expectations could be formed, were situated in countries which had not yet submitted to the Mexican yoke. Nuno de Gusman was commissioned, in 1530, to reduce them to subjection. The advantages which this commander derived from an illustrious

name, did not prevent him from surpassing in barbarity all the adventurers who had previously deluged the unfortunate plains of the New World with blood. Trampling upon millions of carcases, he succeeded in less than two years, in establishing a very extensive dominion, from which the audience of Guadalaxara was instituted. This was always the part of New Spain the most abounding in metals. These riches are more especially common in New Galicia, in New Biscay, and chiefly in the country of Zacatecas. From the midst of these arid mountains is drawn the greatest part of those eighty millions of livres [3,333,333l. 6s. 8d.] which are annually coined in the mints of Mexico. The internal circulation, the East Indies, the national islands, and the contraband trade, absorb near one half of this specie. The mother country receives 44,196,047 of these livres [1,841,501l. 19s. 2d.] to which we must add, five thousand six hundred and thirty-four quintals of copper, which are sold in Europe for 453,600 livres [18,900l.]

In the earliest periods after the conquest, all the payments were made with ingots of silver, and with pieces of gold, the weight and value of which had received the sanction of government. The necessity of having a regular kind of coin was soon felt; and towards the year 1542, these original metals were converted into coins of different sizes. Some copper coins were even stricken, but the Indians rejected them. When they were compelled to receive them, they used to throw them, with contempt, into the lakes and rivers. In less than a year's time, the amount of more than a million of this coin disappeared; and it became necessary to give up a medium of exchange, which disgusted the lower class of people.

Although the breeding of cattle, cultivation, and the working of the mines, have not been carried nearly to such a degree of perfection as they would infallibly have been by an active people, yet the manufactures are still in a worse state. Those of woollen and cotton are very general; but as they are in the hands of the Indians, mestees, and mulattoes, and that they serve only for the clothing of the middling class of people, they are inconceivably imperfect. Some better kinds have been made only at Quexetaco, where tolerably fine woollen cloths are manufactured. But it is particularly in the province of Tjascala that the works

are carried on with spirit. The position of this province between Vera Cruz and Mexico, the mildness of the climate, the beauty of the country, and the fertility of the soil, have attracted there most of the workmen who have passed from the Old to the New World. These manufactures have produced successively silk-stuffs, ribands, gold and silver, and other laces, and hats, which have been consumed by such of the mestees and Spaniards as were not able to pay for the merchandize brought from Europe. Los Angeles, an extensive, rich, and populous town, is the centre of this business. All the earthen ware, and most of the glasses and crystals that are sold in the empire, come from its manufactures. The government hath even fire-arms made there.

What is the reason that Mexico hath not risen to greater prosperity?

THE indolence of the people inhabiting New Spain, must be one of the principal causes that have retarded the prosperity of this celebrated region, but it is not the only one; and the difficulty of communication must have added greatly to this want of activity. The circulation of trade is continually stopped, by all the obstacles that can have been suggested by an unjust and rapacious administration. There are at most but two rivers able to bear even small canoes, and neither of them possesses this advantage in all seasons. There are but few traces of roads even near the great towns; in every other part the provisions or merchandize can only be conveyed upon the back of mules, and every thing that is brittle upon the heads of the Indians. In most of the provinces, the price which the traveller is to pay for lodging, for horses, for guides, and for provisions, is regulated by the police; and this custom, however barbarous it may be thought, is still preferable to what is practised in places where liberty seems to be more respected.

These obstacles to public prosperity have been increased by the severe yoke under which oppressive masters held the Indians, upon whom all the hard labour was imposed. This evil is become more considerable from the diminution of the hands employed to serve the cupidity of the Europeans.

The first steps of the Castilians at Mexico were marked with blood. The carnage extended itself during the memor-

able siege of the city; and it was carried to the highest pitch of excess, in the expeditions that were undertaken to subdue desperate people who had endeavoured to break their chains. The introduction of the small-pox increased the depopulation, which was still augmented soon after, by the epidemic diseases of 1545 and 1576, the first of which deprived the empire of eight hundred thousand inhabitants, and the second, of two millions, if we choose to adopt the calculations of the credulous and exaggerating Torquemada. It is even demonstrated, that without any accidental cause, the number of the inhabitants hath been insensibly reduced to a very few. According to the registers of 1600, there were five hundred thousand tributary Indians in the diocese of Mexico; and in 1741, there remained no more than one hundred and nineteen thousand six hundred and eleven. In the diocese of Los Angeles there were two hundred and fifty-five thousand; and there remained no more than eighty-eight thousand two hundred and forty. In the diocese of Oaxaca there were a hundred and fifty thousand; and there remained no more than forty-four thousand two hundred and twenty-two. We do not know the changes that have happened in the dioceses of the six other churches; but it is probable that they have been the same everywhere.

The custom which prevailed, and still prevails among the Spaniards, mestees, mulattoes, and negroes, frequently to take wives from among the Indians, while no one female of these branches hath ever, or scarce ever, chose husbands from among them, hath undoubtedly contributed to the diminution of this race: but the effect of this circumstance must have been rather confined; and if we be not deceived, consequences much more extensive have been produced by a system of permanent tyranny.

It must be acknowledged, however, that in proportion as the population of the natives diminished, that of the foreigners increased in a very remarkable degree of progression. In 1600, the diocese of Mexico reckoned no more than seven thousand of these families; and in 1741, their number was raised to one hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and eleven. The diocese of Los Angeles reckoned only four thousand, and these were raised to thirty thousand six hundred. The diocese of Oaxaca computed

only a thousand; and these were raised to seven thousand two hundred and ninety-six. The ancient inhabitants, however, have been but imperfectly replaced by the new ones. The cultivation of the lands, and the working of the mines, were the ordinary occupation of the Indians. The Spaniards, the mestees, the mulattoes, and even the blacks, have most of them disdained to attend to these great objects; several of them live in a state of idleness. A still greater number of them devote a few moments to the arts and to commerce. The rest are employed in the service of the rich.

It is particularly in the capital of the empire that we are disgusted with this last circumstance. The inhabitants of Mexico, who for some time had reason to doubt, whether the Castilians were a set of robbers, or a conquering people, saw their capital almost totally destroyed by the cruel wars that were carried on in it. Cortez soon rebuilt it in a style very superior to that in which it appeared before this catastrophe.

The city rises in the midst of a great lake, the banks of which exhibit fortunate situations, which would be delightful if nature were a little assisted by the efforts of art. Upon the lake itself, the eye beholds with satisfaction a number of floating islands. These are rafts formed by weeds interwoven with each other, and sufficiently solid to bear thick layers of earth, and even dwellings lightly constructed. Some Indians live there, and cultivate a plenty of vegetables. These singular gardens do not always occupy the same space. Their situation is changed, when this alteration suits the possessors.

Very wide banks raised upon piles lead up to the city. Five or six canals convey all the productions of the country to its centre, and in it its most beautiful parts. A wholesome water, which is derived from a mountain at the distance only of five or six hundred toises, is distributed in all the houses, and even to all the different stories, by means of aqueducts very well contrived.

The air of this city is very temperate: woollen clothing may be worn there all the year. The least precautions are sufficient to prevent any inconveniences from the heat. Charles V asked a Spaniard, on his arrival from Mexico, how long the interval was there between summer and win-

ter? "just as long," replied he with great truth and wit, "as it takes to pass out of sunshine into the shade."

The advantage which this city hath of being the capital of New Spain, hath successively multiplied its inhabitants. In 1777, the number of births amounted to five thousand nine hundred and fifteen, and that of burials to five thousand and eleven; from whence we may conclude, that its population is not much inferior to two hundred thousand souls. All the citizens are not opulent, but several of them are, perhaps, more so than in any other part of the globe. These riches, very rapidly accumulated, soon had a remarkable influence. Most of the materials, which in other parts were of iron or copper, were here made of silver or gold. These brilliant metals were used as ornaments for the servants, for the horses, for the most common furniture, and employed for the meanest purposes. The manners, which always follow the course of luxury, were raised to the same romantic train of magnificence. The women, within their houses, were attended by thousands of slaves, and did not appear in public without a retinue, which amongst us is reserved for the majesty of the throne. To these extravagancies the men added still greater profusions, which they lavished upon the negro women, whom they raised publicly to the rank of their mistresses. The luxury so inordinate in the common actions of life, surpassed all bounds upon occasion of the least festival. The general and prevailing pride was then in commotion, and every individual lavished millions to justify his own. The crimes necessary to support these extravagancies were previously expiated; for superstition declared every man holy and just, who bestowed large sums upon the churches.

Every circumstance bore the mark of an ostentation hitherto unknown in the two hemispheres; the inhabitants were no longer satisfied with a decent dwelling, situated in wide and even streets. Most of them required hotels, the extent of which was superior to either their convenience, or their elegance. Public edifices were multiplied, without recalling to the mind of any man the prosperous days of architecture, or even of the best Gothic times. The principal squares had all the same form, the same regularity, and the same kind of fountain, with ornaments executed without taste. Trees that were ill chosen, and of a dirty ap-

pearance, deprived the walks of the ornaments which they might have received from avenues well distributed, and from water-works. Among the fifty-five convents which had been founded by a spirit of credulity worthy of pity, there were very few of them which did not create disgust from the faults of their construction. The numberless temples, in which the treasures of the whole globe were heaped up, were generally devoid of majesty, and were not calculated to inspire those who frequented them with ideas and sentiments worthy of the Supreme Being, whom they came to adore. Among this multiplicity of immense buildings, there are but two that are worthy of fixing the attention of the traveller. One is the palace of the viceroy, where the tribunals of justice are also holden, where the coin is stricken, and where the quicksilver is deposited. The people, who are driven to despair by famine, burnt it in 1692. It hath been since rebuilt upon a better plan. It is a square with four towers, and is seven hundred and fifty feet in length, and six hundred and ninety in breadth. The cathedral, begun in 1573, and finished in 1667, would equally do honour to the best artists. It is four hundred feet in length, by one hundred and ninety-five in breadth, and hath cost 9,460,800 livres [394,200*l.*] Unfortunately, these edifices are not so solid as it might be wished they were.

We have seen, that Mexico was situated upon a considerable lake, divided by a narrow slip of land into two parts, the one filled with sweet water, the other with salt. These waters appear equally to flow from a high mountain at a small distance from the city, but with this difference, that the salt waters must necessarily traverse some mines which communicate this quality to them. But beside these regular springs, there exist, a little further off, four small lakes, which in tempestuous seasons, sometimes discharge themselves into the great one with destructive violence.

The ancient inhabitants of this city had always been exposed to inundations, which made them purchase, at a very dear rate, the advantages they acquired from the situation they had chosen to fix the centre of their power upon. To the calamities inseparable from these too frequent overflowings, the conquerors experienced the additional disappointment of seeing their heavier buildings, though raised upon

piles, sink, in a very short time, from four to six inches, in a soil that had not firmness enough to support them.

Attempts were made, at different times, to turn aside these dreadful torrents : but the directors of these great works had not sufficient skill to employ the most effectual means ; nor were the subaltern agents sufficiently zealous to supply, by their efforts, the want of capacity in their chiefs.

The engineer Martinès conceived, in 1607, the idea of a great canal, which appeared in general preferable to all the methods pursued before that period. In order to defray the expences of this project, the government required the hundredth part of the value of the houses, lands, and merchandize ; a species of impost unknown in the New World. Four hundred and seventy-one thousand one hundred and fifty-four Indians were employed, during six years, at this work ; and the undertaking was afterwards judged to be impracticable.

The court, wearied with the diversity of opinions, and the troubles they occasioned, decreed, in 1631, that Mexico should be abandoned, and that a new capital should be erected on some other spot. The spirit of avarice, which objected to the least sacrifice ; that of libidinousness, which was afraid of having its pleasures interrupted ; and that of indolence, which shuddered at the idea of trouble ; all the passions, in a word, united themselves to oblige the ministry to change their resolutions ; and they prevailed.

Upwards of a century passed away before the government attended to the duty of preventing the misfortunes of which the people were incessantly complaining. At length their attention was roused. In 1763, it was resolved to cut a mountain, in which some excavations only had till that time been made ; and the waters have since had as free a passage as the public security required. The commercial body have undertaken this great work for the sum of 4,320,000 livres [180,000*l.*] They even agreed to pay whatever additional expences this labour might be attended with, and that if there were any savings, they should be applied to the profit of the treasury. This generosity hath not been a virtue of mere ostentation. The merchants have expended 1,890,000 livres [78,750*l.*] in rendering this service to their country.

Other works are meditated. The project of drying up the great lake that surrounds Mexico seems to be at a stand; and persons of the art require 8,100,000 livres [337,500*l.*] to complete the new plan in a proper manner. This is a large sum. But what is money, when the business is to make the air wholesome, to preserve the lives of men, or to increase provisions? What infinite good would the rulers of the world do, and how much will they be honoured, when the gold which they lavish in inordinate luxury, upon greedy favourites, or in idle caprices, shall be consecrated to the improvement of their empire! An airy hospital, constructed with skill and carefully managed; the abolition of beggary, or the employing of indigent persons; the paying off of the national debt; a moderate tax, distributed with equity; the reformation of the laws, by the composition of a clear and simple code; such institutions would raise their glory to a higher pitch than magnificent palaces; than the conquest of a province, after a number of victories; than all the bronzes, all the marbles, and all the inscriptions of flattery.

If the court of Madrid, who have the greatest reason to entertain such hopes, should do for Mexico what they have proposed, they will soon see this famous city become the seat of government, the place of the mint, the residence of the most extensive proprietors, the centre of all important affairs; they will behold it soaring to a still greater height, communicating to the provinces under its dependence the impulse it shall have received, giving energy to industry, increasing internal circulation, and, by a necessary consequence, extending and multiplying its foreign connections.

*Connections of
Mexico with the
Philippines.*

THAT which Mexico hath formed with the Philippines, is the most notorious of all those it maintains through the channel of the South sea.

When the court of Madrid, whose ambition increased with their prosperity, had conceived the plan of forming a great establishment in Asia, their attention was seriously engaged in considering of expedients to ensure it success. This project was necessarily attended with great difficulties. The riches of America so powerfully attracted the Spa-

niards, who consented to a voluntary exile, that it did not appear possible to engage even the most wretched of them to settle at the Philippines, unless it were agreed to give them a share in the treasures of those islands. This sacrifice was resolved upon. The rising colony was authorised to send every year into America India goods, in exchange for metals.

This unrestrained freedom was attended with such important consequences, that the jealousy of the mother-country was excited. Tranquillity was in some measure restored, by restraining a commerce, which was thought to be, and which really was, immense. The trade that was to be allowed in future, was divided into twelve thousand equal shares. Every head of a family was to have one, and persons in office a number proportioned to their rank. Religious communities were included in this arrangement, according to the extent of their credit, and the opinion that was entertained of their utility.

The vessels which set out at first from the island of Cebu, and afterwards from the island of Luconia, originally took the route of Peru. The length of this voyage was prodigious. Trade-winds were discovered, which opened a much shorter passage to Mexico; this branch of commerce was transacted on its coast, where it was settled.

A vessel of about two thousand ton burthen is dispatched every year from the port of Manilla. According to the laws at present in force, and which have frequently been varied, this ship ought not to carry more than four thousand bales of merchandize, and yet it is laden with at least double that quantity. The expences of building, of fitting out, and of the voyage, which are always infinitely more considerable than they ought to be, are supported by the government, which receives no other indemnification than 75,000 piastres or 405,000 livres [16,875*l.*] per vessel.

The departure of it is fixed for the month of July. After having cleared a multitude of islands and rocks, which are always troublesome, and sometimes dangerous, the galleon steers northward as far as the thirtieth degree of latitude. There the trade-winds begin to blow, which convey it to the place of its destination. It is generally thought, that if it proceeded further, it would meet with stronger and more regular winds, which would hasten its course:

but the commanders are forbidden, under the heaviest penalties, to go out of the track that hath been marked out to them.

This is undoubtedly the reason that hath prevented the Spaniards, during the course of two centuries, from making the least discovery upon an ocean, which would have offered so many objects of instruction and advantage to more enlightened and less circumspect nations. The voyage lasts six months, because the vessel is over-stocked with men and merchandize, and that all those that are on-board are a set of timid navigators, who never make but little way during the night-time, and often, though without necessity, make none at all.

The port of Acapulco, where the vessel arrives, hath two inlets, separated from each other by a small island: the entrance into them in the day is by means of a sea-breeze, and the sailing out in the night-time is effected by a land-breeze. It is defended only by a bad fort, fifty soldiers, forty-two pieces of cannon, and thirty-two of the corps of artillery. It is equally extensive, safe, and commodious. The basin which forms this beautiful harbour is surrounded by lofty mountains, which are so dry, that they are even destitute of water. Four hundred families of Chinese, mulattoes, and negroes, which compose three companies of militia, are the only persons accustomed to breathe the air of this place, which is burning, heavy, and unwholesome. The number of inhabitants in this feeble and miserable colony is considerably increased upon the arrival of the galleons, by the merchants from all the provinces of Mexico, who come to exchange their silver and their cochineal, for the spices, muslins, china, printed lincens, silks, perfumes, and gold works of Asia.

At this market, the fraud impudently begun in the Old World, is as impudently completed in the New. The statutes have limited the sale to 2,700,000 livres [112,500*l.*] and it exceeds 10,800,000 livres [400,000*l.*] All the money produced by these exchanges should give ten per cent. to the government: but they are deprived of three fourths of the revenue which they ought to collect from their customs, by false entries.

After staying here about three months, the galleon resumes its course to the Philippine islands, with a few com-

panies of infantry, destined to recruit the garrison of Manila. This vessel hath been intercepted in its passage three times by the English. It was taken in 1587 by Cavendish, in 1709 by Rogers, and in 1742 by Anson. The least part of the riches with which it is laden remains in the colony; the rest is distributed among the nations which had contributed to form its cargo.

The long passage which the galleons had to make, had made it a desirable thing to have a port where they might refit and take in refreshments. Such a port was found on the road from Acapulco to the Philippines, in an archipelago known by the name of the Marianne islands.

THESE islands form a chain which extends from the 13th to the 22d degree. Several of them are nothing more than rocks: but there are nine of them which

*Description of
the Marianne
islands.*

are of some extent. There it is that nature, in all her richness and beauty, displays a perpetual verdure; abounds in flowers of an exquisite odour, in waters as clear as crystal, falling into cascades; in trees loaded with flowers and fruits at the same time, and in picturesque situations which art will never imitate.

In this archipelago, which is situated under the torrid zone, the air is pure, the sky serene, and the climate temperate.

It was formerly inhabited by numbers of people, the origin of whom nothing remains to indicate. They were undoubtedly thrown on these coasts by some storm; but this event must have happened so long ago, that they had forgotten their origin, and thought themselves the only inhabitants of the globe.

Some customs, most of them similar to those of the other savages of the South sea, serve them instead of a form of worship, of a code of laws, and of a system of government. They passed their days in perpetual indolence; and it was to the bananas, to the cocoa-nuts, and especially to the rima, that they owed this misfortune or advantage.

The rima, mentioned by some travellers under the name of the bread-tree, is not yet well known to the botanists. It is a tree, the stem of which, that is high and straight, is divided towards its top into several branches. Its leaves are

alternate, large, firm, thick, and deeply sinuated towards their lateral edges. The youngest of them, before they unfold themselves, are inclosed in a membrane which dries up, and when it falls, leaves a circular impresson round the stem. They yield, as well as the other parts of the tree, a very viscous, milky fluid. From the axilla of the superior leaves, a spongy substance is produced, six inches in length, and covered all over with male flowers, very close to each other. Lower down, other substances are found, loaded with female flowers, the pistil of which becomes an elongated berry filled with a kernel. These berries, which are supported upon one common axis, are so close to each other, that they are confounded, and form, by their assemblage, a very large fruit, ten inches in length, and beset with thick, short, and blunted points. It appears that there are two species or varieties of the rima. The fruit of one of them is pulpy on the inside, and full of kernels, which are good for eating, and which have the figure and taste of the chesnut. The fruit of the other species is smaller: it hath no kernels, because these come to nothing when it is perfectly ripe. The pulp of it is soft, sweetish, and unwholesome. But when it is gathered a little before it is ripe, it hath the taste of the artichoke, and is eaten as bread, from whence it hath been called the bread fruit. Those who wish to keep it one or more years, cut it into slices, and dry it in the oven, or in the sun.

There are three things which appear worthy of remark in the history of the Marianne islands.

The use of fire was totally unknown there. None of those terrible volcanoes, the destructive traces of which are indelibly marked on the face of the globe; none of those celestial phenomena which frequently light up devouring and unexpected flames in all climates; none of those fortunate occurrences, which, by friction or collision, extract brilliant sparks from such a number of bodies: nothing, in a word, had given the peaceable inhabitants of the Marianne islands the least idea of an element so familiar to other nations. It was necessary that the resentment of the first Spaniards that arrived upon these savage coasts, should burn some hundreds of their huts, in order to make them acquainted with it.

This use of fire was little calculated to give them a fa-

vourable idea of it, or to make them wish to see it appear again. Accordingly, they took it for an animal which fixed itself to the wood, and fed upon it. Those whom their ignorance of so new an object had induced to come near it, having burnt themselves, their cries inspired the rest with terror, so that they did not dare to look at it but at a great distance. They dreaded the bite of this wild beast, whom they thought capable of wounding them by the mere violence of its respiration. They recovered, however, by degrees from the consternation with which they had been seized: their mistake was gradually removed, and they at length accustomed themselves to the use of this valuable advantage, of which all other known people had been in possession from time immemorial.

Another circumstance worthy of attention is the superiority which the weaker sex had assumed over the stronger in the Marianne islands. Such was their ascendant, that the women there enjoyed unlimited power in their families; that nothing could be parted without their consent, and that they had the free disposal of every thing; that in no instance, even that of infidelity publicly acknowledged, it was permitted to be wanting in the attentions that were due to them; that how little soever they themselves might judge their husbands to be deficient in mildness, complaisance, and submission, they were at liberty to make a new choice; and that if they thought themselves betrayed, they might pillage the hut, and cut down the trees of the traitor, or make their relations, or companions, commit the same havoc.

But how could such strange customs have been established, and have taken root? If we credit ancient or modern accounts, the men of this archipelago were black, ugly, and deformed; they had most of them a disgusting cutaneous disease, notwithstanding the daily use of the bath. The women, on the contrary, had a tolerably clear complexion, regular features, an easy air, some graces, and a taste for singing and dancing. It is not therefore surprising that with all these means of pleasing, they should have acquired an absolute empire, which cannot be shaken. It is truly extraordinary, that there should have been any countries, and especially savage regions, where a difference so marked hath been found between the two sexes. The unanimity of historians upon this point, will probably never

silence the doubts that naturally arise in the mind from so improbable an account.

The united testimonies of any number of writers, cannot prevail against a well-known, general, and constant, law of nature. We know, that in every part, except at the Marianne islands, the woman has been found, as she ought to be, subject to the man. In order to induce me to believe this exception, it must be supported by another; which is, that in this region, the women were superior to the men, not only in understanding, but even in bodily strength. If I be not assured of one of these facts, I shall deny the other; unless, however, some superstitious tenet have rendered their persons sacred. For there is nothing which superstition doth not alter, no custom, however monstrous, which it doth not establish, no crimes to which it doth not lead, no sacrifices which it doth not obtain. If superstition, at the Marianne islands, declares to man, it is the will of God that thou shouldst cringe before woman, he will not fail to cringe to her. Beauty, talents, and wit, in all countries of the world, whether savage or civilized, will induce a man to throw himself at the feet of a woman: but these advantages peculiar to some women, cannot establish in any part a general system, of the tyranny of the weaker sex over the stronger. The man commands the woman, even in those countries where the woman commands the nation. The phenomenon, at the Marianne islands, would be in the system of morality, the same as the equilibrium of two unequal weights, suspended to levers of equal length, would be in the system of philosophy. No kind of authority ought to induce us to believe an absurdity. But it may be urged, that the women may have deserved this authority on account of some important services, the memory of which may have been lost. Supposing this to be the case, the men would soon have forgotten the gratitude they might have shewn in the first instance.

The third remarkable thing in the Marianne islands, was a *pross*, or canoe, the singular form of which hath always attracted the attention of most enlightened navigators.

These people resided in islands separated from each other by considerable distances. Although they had neither the means nor the desire of making exchanges, yet they wished to communicate with each other. They succeeded in this

design with the assistance of a vessel, entirely safe, though very small: a vessel fit for every naval evolution, notwithstanding the simplicity of its construction; and so easily managed, that three men were sufficient for all the manœuvres; a vessel, which received the winds sideways, a circumstance absolutely necessary in these latitudes; which had the unparalleled advantage of going and returning, without ever tacking about, and merely by shifting the sail; a vessel, in a word, so expeditious, that it ran twelve or fifteen knots in less than an hour, and that it sometimes went faster than the wind. All connoisseurs acknowledge, that this proff, which is called *flying*, on account of its lightness, is the most perfect kind of boat that hath ever been contrived; and the invention of it cannot be disputed with the inhabitants of the Marianne islands, since the model of it hath never been found in any sea in the world. If it were reasonable to decide upon the genius of a nation, from one single distinct art, we could not avoid having the greatest opinion of these savages, who, with coarse utensils, and without the assistance of iron, have obtained effects at sea, which the most enlightened people have not been able to procure to themselves from a multiplicity of contrivances. But in order to determine with judgment on this matter, it would require other proofs than a single talent, which chance may have supplied; and these proofs are not to be found in any history.

The Marianne islands were discovered in 1521 by Magellan. This celebrated navigator called them the Ladrone islands, because their savage inhabitants, who had not the least idea of the right of property, which is unknown in a state of nature, stole from on-board their ships some trifles which tempted their curiosity. The Spaniards neglected, for a long time, to fix themselves in this archipelago, where there were none of those rich mines that excited their cupidity. It was only in 1668, that the ships which stopped there, from time to time, in their passage from Mexico to the East Indies, landed a few missionaries on these islands. Ten years after this, the court of Madrid thought that they did not gain a sufficient number of subjects by the means of persuasion; and they supported the sermons of their missionaries with a military force.

Savages, living by themselves, and guided by a wild in-

strict; to whom the bow and the arrow were even unknown, and whose only weapon of defence was a large stick: such savages could not resist the European arms and troops. Nevertheless, most of them suffered themselves to be put to death rather than they would submit. A great number of them were the victims of the disgraceful maladies which their inhuman conquerors had introduced among them. Those who had escaped all these disasters, took the desperate resolution of making their wives miscarry, in order that they might not leave behind them a progeny of slaves. The population decreased, throughout the whole archipelago, to such a degree, that it became necessary, five-and twenty or thirty years ago, to unite the feeble remains of them in the single island of Guam.

This island is forty leagues in circumference. Its harbour, situated in the western part, and defended by a battery of eight guns, is formed on one side by a slip of land which advances two leagues into the sea, and on the other by a shoal of the same extent, which surrounds it almost circularly. Four ships may anchor here, sheltered from all winds except the western, which never blows hard in these latitudes.

At the distance of four leagues from this harbour, upon the borders of the sea, and in a fortunate position, the agreeable town of Agana is situated. In this chief place of the colony, and in twenty-one small hamlets scattered around the island, fifteen hundred inhabitants are distributed, the unfortunate remains of a population formerly numerous.

The interior part of Guam serves as an asylum and a pasturage for the goats, hogs, oxen, and poultry, which the Spaniards brought there at the time of the conquest, and which have since become wild. These animals, which must either be shot or caught in a trap, were the principal food of the Indians and of their oppressors, when the face of things was suddenly changed.

An active, humane, and enlightened man hath at length understood, that population would not be restored, but that it would even still continue decreasing, unless he could succeed in introducing agriculture into his island. This elevated idea hath induced him to become himself a cultivator. Stimulated by his example, the natives of the country have

cleared those lands, the property of which he had promised them. These fields have been covered with rice, cacao, maize, sugar, indigo, cotton, fruits, and vegetables; the use of which, they had been suffered to remain ignorant of during one or two centuries; their success hath increased their docility. These children of rude nature, in whom tyranny and superstition had completed the degradation of the human species, have followed in the workshops some arts of primary necessity; and have frequented, without any evident signs of reluctance, the schools that have been opened for their instruction. Their enjoyments have increased with their occupations; and they have at length experienced happiness in one of the finest countries in the world: so true it is that every thing may be accomplished by mildness and benevolence, since these virtues are capable of extinguishing resentment even in the mind of a savage.

This unexpected revolution hath been brought about by M. Tobias; who, in 1772, still governed the Marianne islands. May this virtuous and respectable Spaniard one day obtain what would complete his happiness, the consolation of seeing his favourite children forego their passion for the cocoa-tree wine, and their turn for labour increase!

If the Spaniards, from the beginning, had been inspired with the reasonable views of the prudent Tobias, the Marianne islands would have been civilized and cultivated. This double advantage would have procured to this archipelago a security which it cannot expect from a garrison of an hundred and fifty men, concentrated in Guam.

The conquerors, quiet in their possessions, would then have devoted themselves to their passion for new discoveries, which were at that time the prevailing turn of the nation. Assisted by the genius of their new subjects for navigation, their activity would have conveyed the useful arts, and the spirit of society, into the numerous islands that cover the Pacific ocean, and still beyond them. The universe would have been enlarged, as it were, by such glorious labours. All commercial nations would undoubtedly have derived, in process of time, some advantage from connections formed with these regions, which were before unknown: since it is impossible that one nation should enrich itself, and that others should not partake of its prosperity; but the court of Madrid would have enjoyed sooner, and more constantly,

the productions of these new establishments. If we do not mistake, this arrangement of matters would have been more advantageous to Spain, than that which confines the Marianne islands to the furnishing of refreshments for the galleons returning from Mexico to the Phillipines, as California is destined to supply them to those who go from the Phillipines to Mexico.

Ancient and modern state of California.

CALIFORNIA is properly a long neck of land, which proceeds from the northern coasts of America, and runs along between east and south as far as the torrid zone : it is washed on each side by the Pacific ocean. The part that is known of this peninsula is three hundred leagues long, and ten, twenty, thirty, or forty, broad.

It is impossible that, throughout such an extent of country, the nature of the soil and the temperature of the air should be everywhere the same. It may be said, however, that, in general, the climate here is dry and excessively hot ; the ground bare, stony, mountainous, sandy, and consequently barren, and unfit for agriculture and for the breeding of cattle. Amidst the small number of trees that are found here, the most useful is the pitahaya, the produce of which constitutes the principal food of the Californians. This tree is a species of the *cereus peruvianus*, which, like the rest of the same class, hath no leaves. Its stems, which are straight and fluted, have their sides full of prickles, and furnish an immediate support to some whitish flowers, similar to those of the nopal on which the cochineal lives, but much longer. The fruits which succeed these flowers have inequalities upon their surface, which are produced by the remaining basis of the scales of the calix. They are of the size of a hen's egg, red on the outside, and filled in the inside with a white pulp fit for eating, and sweeter and more delicate than the ordinary fig. In the midst of this pulp are found some small, black, and shining seeds.

The sea, which is richer than the land, swarms with most excellent fish of every kind. But the circumstance which renders the gulf of California of more importance is the pearls, which, in the fishing-season, draw there, from the several provinces of Mexico, a set of greedy men, who have

been subjected to the tax of giving the fifth part of their fishery to government.

The Californians are well made, and very strong. They are extremely pusillanimous, inconstant, indolent, stupid, and even insensible. They are children, in whom reason is not yet unfolded. They are more swarthy than the Mexicans. This difference of colour proves that the civilized state of society subverts or totally changes the order and laws of nature, since we find under the temperate zone a savage people, that are blacker than the civilized nations of the torrid zone.

Before the Europeans had penetrated into California, the natives had no form of religion; and that of their government was such as might be expected from their ignorance. Each nation was an assemblage of several cottages, more or less numerous, that were all mutually confederated by alliances, but without any chief. They were strangers even to filial obedience, although this sentiment be, if not more lively, at least more pure, in the state of nature than in that of society.

In reality, the helps which a regular system of police affords to all individuals among civilized nations, the young savages expect only from their father. It is he who provides for their subsistence when they are children, and who watches for their safety. How is it possible that they should not have recourse to his benevolence? How should they not avoid, with care, what might deprive them of his support?

Respect, which is not exacted, can scarce be diminished in children, who constantly return, impelled by habit still more than by want, to the cottage in which they were born, and from which they never wander to any distance. The separations which education, industry, and trade, so frequently occasion amongst us, and which cannot but loosen the ties of kindred, are unknown among the savages. They remain with the person to whom they owe their existence, as long as he lives. It is not possible, therefore, that they should deviate from obedience. They receive no imperious orders. There is no being more free than the little savage. He is born in a state of liberty. He goes and comes, walks out and returns, and even sleeps from home, without ever being asked what he hath been doing, or what hath been become of him. The idea of exerting family authority, in order to bring him back, if he

should choose to disappear, would never be suggested. Nothing is so common in cities as bad fathers; but there are none to be found amidst the forests. The more societies increase in opulence and luxury, the less are the claims of consanguinity attended to. We may even venture to say, that the severity, variety, and long continuance, of our system of education; that all these several fatigues contribute to alienate the affection of our children for us. Nothing but experience can reconcile them to us. We are obliged to wait a long time before our cares are returned with gratitude, and our reprimands are forgotten. The savage hath never heard any of these from the mouth of his parents. He was never chastised by them. When he knew how to strike the animal on whom he was to feed, he had scarce any thing more to learn. His passions being natural, he can satisfy them without dreading the severity of his parents; while there are numberless motives which oblige our parents to counteract our propensities. Can it be supposed that there is not one child among us, who, impelled by the desire of enjoying speedily a large fortune, does not think that his father lives too long? We wish we could persuade ourselves that there were not. The heart of the savage, to whom his father hath nothing to leave, is a stranger to this kind of parricide.

In our families, children are apt to think that their aged parents talk at random; but it is not the same in the hut of the savage. There is very little talking in it, and a high opinion is entertained of the wisdom of parents. Their instructions supply the deficiency of observation respecting the craft of animals, the woods which contain game, the coasts abounding in fish, and the seasons and times proper for hunting and fishing. If the old man should relate any particularities of his wars or of his travels; if he should recal the memory of the battles he hath been engaged in, or of the snares he hath escaped; if he should elevate his mind to explain to his children some of the most simple phenomena of nature; if, on a star-light night, standing at the entrance of his hut, he should trace out to them, with his finger, the course of the constellations that glitter over their heads, according to the limited knowledge he hath of them: all these circumstances will excite their admiration of him. Should a storm come on, should any revolution happen

upon the earth, in the air, or in the waters, or should any agreeable or distressing event take place, all the children exclaim, our father foretold it to us; and their submission to his counsels, as well as their veneration for his person, is increased. When he is drawing near to his last moments, anxiety and grief are painted in their countenances, their tears flow at his death, and a long-continued silence prevails around his bed. He is laid in the earth, and his burial-place is sacred. Annual honours are paid to his ashes; and, in important or doubtful circumstances, they are sometimes consulted. Children, alas! among ourselves are devoted to so many dissipations, that their fathers are soon forgotten by them. It is not, however, that I prefer a savage to a civilized state. This is a protestation I have made more than once. But the more I reflect upon this point, the more it seems to me, that from the most rude to the most civilized state of nature, every thing is nearly compensated, virtues and vices, naturally good and evil. In the forest, as well as in society, the happiness of one individual may be less or greater than that of another: but I imagine that nature hath set certain bounds to the felicity of every considerable portion of the human species, beyond which we have nearly as much to lose as to gain.

Mexico had no sooner been pacified, than Cortez conceived the project of adding California to his conquests. He undertook this expedition himself, in 1526; but it was not a successful one. Those which were afterwards undertaken in rapid succession to each other, during the course of two centuries, were not more fortunate; whether the expences of them were supported by individuals or by the government: this continuance of adverse fortune may be accounted for.

The custom of taking views, tracing plans, or charts, of the places that were visited, was not then very common. If some adventurer, more intelligent, or more laborious than his companions, wrote an account of his voyage, it was seldom deposited in the public registers; and if it were, it was buried in the dust and forgotten. The printing of it would have remedied this inconvenience; but the fear of making foreigners acquainted with what it was impossible to conceal from them, occasioned this mode of communication to be rejected. Thus it was, that the people gain-

ed no experience. Absurdities were perpetrated ; and the last commanders who undertook these expeditions, miscarried by the same faults that had prevented the success of the former.

The conquest of California had been entirely given up, when the jesuits, in 1697, solicited permission to undertake it. As soon as they had obtained the consent of government, they began to execute a plan of legislation, which they had formed from accurate ideas of the nature of the soil, the character of the inhabitants, and the influence of the climate. Their proceedings were not directed by fanaticism. They arrived among the savages whom they intended to civilize, with curiosities that might amuse them ; with corn for their food, and with apparel calculated to please them. The hatred these people bore to the Spanish name could not support itself against these demonstrations of benevolence. They testified their acknowledgments as much as their want of sensibility and their inconstancy would permit them. These faults were partly overcome by the religious institutors, who pursued their project with a degree of warmth and assiduity peculiar to their society. They made themselves carpenters, masons, weavers, and husbandmen ; and by these means succeeded in imparting knowledge, and, in some measure, a taste for the most useful arts, to this savage people, who have been all successfully formed into one body. In 1745, they composed forty-three villages, that were separated from each other by the barrenness of the soil, and the want of water.

The inhabitants of these small villages subsist principally on corn and pulse, which they cultivate, and on the fruits and domestic animals of Europe, the breeding of which is an object of continual attention. The Indians have each their field, and the property of what they reap ; but such is their want of foresight, that they would squander in a day what they had gathered, if the missionary did not take upon himself to distribute it to them as they stand in need of it. They already manufacture some coarse stuffs. The necessities they are in want of are purchased with pearls, which they fish in the gulf, and with wine nearly resembling that of Madeira, which they sell to New Spain and to the galleons ; and the use of which, experience hath shewn, it is necessary to prohibit among them.

A few laws, that are very simple, are sufficient to regulate this rising state. In order to enforce the observance of them, the missionary chooses the most intelligent person of the village; who is empowered to whip and imprison; the only punishments of which they have any knowledge.

So many cruel and destructive scenes have hitherto distressed our minds, that we may be permitted to stop for a moment in considering labours that were inspired by humanity, and directed by benevolence: all other conquests had been made by force of arms. We have seen nothing but men destroying or loading each other with chains. The regions we have gone over, have successively presented to us so many scenes of perfidy, of ferociousness, of treachery, of avarice, and of all the crimes to which man is stimulated by the combination and violence of the most inordinate passions. The traces of our pen have been constantly marked with blood. The region we are now entered upon, is the only one which hath been subdued by reason. Let us repose ourselves, and take breath. Let the picture of innocence and peace dissipate the gloomy ideas with which we have hitherto been assailed, and relieve us for a moment from those painful sensations with which our heart hath so constantly been oppressed, agonized, and torn. Alas! the new sensations I experience will last too short a time to excite envy. Those great catastrophes which subvert the globe, and the description of which is pleasing to all readers, from the violence of the shocks they receive from them, and from the tears, partly delicious, and partly bitter, which they draw from their eyes, will soon sully the remainder of these deplorable annals. Readers, are ye wicked, or are ye good? If ye were good, ye would not, it should seem, listen to the recital of these calamities; if ye are wicked, ye would hear them without shedding a tear. Yet, I perceive your eyes are overflowing. Ye pant after happiness, and yet misfortune alone can awaken your attention. The reason of it is plain. The afflictions of others afford you comfort in your own, and your self-estimation is increased by the compassion you bestow upon them.

In all California there are only two garrisons, each consisting of thirty men, and a soldier with every missionary. These troops were chosen by the legislators, and were under their orders, though they were paid by the government.

The court of Madrid saw no inconvenience in leaving these trifling forces in the hands of those who had acquired their confidence; and they have been convinced, that this was the only expedient to preserve their new conquests from a system of oppression totally destructive.

Such was the state of affairs, when, in 1767, the court of Madrid expelled the jesuits from California, as they did from all the other provinces. These missionaries had formed the project of carrying on their labours upon the two shores of the sea, as far as the chain of mountains which connects California with New Spain. They wished to raise the empire, the subjects of which they were increasing, to a degree of power, that might allow them to behold with tranquillity the voyages of the Russians, and the discovery of the north west passage, which the English have been in search of for so long a time. Far from abandoning these great projects, it is said that the Spanish ministry hath extended them still further. It will not even be long before the inhabitants of the two hemispheres will see them carried into execution, unless some unfurmoutable obstacles, proceeding from unexpected events, should counteract their plans.

But till these vast speculations should either be annihilated or realised, California serves for a port of refreshment for ships that sail from the Philippine islands to Mexico. Cape St. Lucas, situated at the southern extremity of the peninsula, is the place where they touch. There they find a good harbour, refreshments, and signals, which give them information of the appearance of any enemy in these latitudes, which are the most dangerous for them. It was in 1734 that the galleon arrived there for the first time; where it hath ever since been ordered, or compelled by necessity, to stop.

The system, adopted by all the states of Europe, of holding colonies in the most absolute dependence on the mother-country, hath always rendered the connections of Mexico with Asia suspicious to several of the Spanish politicians. Far from agreeing with them in opinion, Alberoni wished to give an unlimited extension to the freedom of these connections. It appeared to him a very wise plan, that the East Indies should clothe the two continents of America. It was his idea, that the colonists would be dress-

ed more to their taste, at a cheaper rate, and in a manner more suitable to the climate. In times of the European wars they would not be exposed, as they frequently had been, to the want of the most common and necessary articles of life. They would be richer, more attached to the mother-country, and better able to defend themselves against the enemies it might draw upon them. These enemies themselves would be less formidable, because they would gradually lose the strength which they acquire from furnishing Mexico and Peru with provisions. Spain, in a word, by collecting from the merchandize of India the same duties which it receives from those that are furnished by its rivals, would lose no part of its revenue. It might even, upon emergencies, obtain from its colonies succours, which, at present, they have neither the will nor the power to supply.

The views of this bold and enterprising minister were extended still further. He wished that the mother-country itself should form immense connections with the east, through the medium of its American colonies. According to him, the Philippines, which had hitherto paid an enormous tribute to the industry of the European or Asiatic nations, that furnished them with manufactures, or productions, might send their inhabitants in search of them, upon their own ships, and obtain them at first hand. By giving the same quantity of metals as their competitors, they would purchase at a cheaper rate, because these metals, coming directly from America, would not have incurred so much expence, as those which are conveyed into our regions, before they go to India. The merchandize embarked at Manilla, would arrive at Panama, upon an ocean perpetually calm, in a very straight line, and with the same winds. By means of a very short canal, which hath been solicited a long time by the merchants, the cargoes would afterwards be easily conveyed to the mouth of the Chagre, where they would be embarked for Europe.

Alberoni was well aware, that those powers, whose interests this arrangement would prejudice, and whose trade it would ruin, would endeavour to obstruct it; but he thought himself in a condition to bid defiance to their resentment in the European seas, and he had already given orders for putting the coasts and harbours of the South sea.

in a state not to fear the efforts of any feeble squadrons that might attack them.

These views were approved of by some. Those who were enthusiasts in favour of Alberoni, and there were many of them, conceived them to be the sublime efforts of a powerful genius, for the prosperity and glory of a monarchy, which he was endeavouring to restore to its former splendour. Others, and these were the greater number, considered these projects, so great in appearance, merely as the ravings of a disordered imagination, which exaggerated the resources of a ruined state, and which flattered itself that it should give the commerce of the whole world to a nation reduced, for two centuries past, to the impossibility of carrying on its own. The disgrace of this extraordinary man quieted the ferment which he had raised in the two hemispheres. The connections of the Philippines with Mexico continued upon the former footing, as well as those which this great province maintained with Peru by the South sea.

Communication of Mexico with Peru and Spain. THE coasts of Mexico do not resemble those of Peru, where the vicinity and height of the Cordilleras entertain a perpetual spring, and keep up regular and mild winds. As soon as the line is crossed, at the height of Panama, the free communication of the atmosphere from east to west being no longer interrupted by that prodigious chain of mountains, the climate becomes different. The navigation, indeed, is easy and safe in these latitudes from the middle of October to the end of May: but during the rest of the year, the calms and storms which alternately prevail, render the sea troublesome and dangerous.

The coast which borders this ocean, hath an extent of six hundred leagues. Formerly, not one trading vessel, nor fishing smack, was known to come out of the ports which nature hath formed there. This inactivity was partly owing to the indolence of the people: but the fatal arrangements made by the court of Madrid, had contributed still more to produce it.

When the empire of the Incas, and that of Montezuma, first became provinces of Spain, the communication between them by the South sea was open and uncontrouled. Some

time after this, it was restrained to two ships; and in 1636 it was entirely prohibited. Urgent and repeated representations determined the government to open it again at the end of half a century, but with restrictions that rendered it of no effect. It was not till 1774, that North and South America were allowed to make all the exchanges which their mutual interest might require. The several parts of the two regions will undoubtedly derive great advantages from this new arrangement of things. It may however be foretold, that it will be more serviceable to Guatimala than to any other country.

This audience extends its important jurisdiction over twelve leagues to the west, sixty to the east, a hundred to the north, and three hundred to the south: it is formed by seven or eight provinces.

That of Costa Ricca is very thinly peopled, but little cultivated, and scarce affords any thing except cattle. A great part of the ancient inhabitants have hitherto refused to submit to the yoke.

Nicaragua is regularly distressed every year with a six months rain, which falls down in torrents, and a six months devouring drought. The inhabitants are some of the most effeminate men of New Spain, though among the least opulent.

The Castilians have exercised more cruelties at Honduras than at any other place. They made a desert of it, and accordingly they get nothing from it, except a little cassia, and some sarsaparilla.

Vera-Pas used to furnish the old Mexico with those bright plumages, of which those pictures, that have been extolled for so long a time, were composed. This province hath lost all its importance, since this kind of trade hath been given up.

Soconusco is known only by the perfection of its cacao. The greatest part of this fruit supplies America itself. The two hundred quintals that are brought to Europe belong to government. If there be a greater quantity than the court can consume, it is sold to the public at double the price of that which comes from Caraccas.

Chiapa, though in the centre of Mexico, formed a state independent of that empire at the arrival of the Spaniards: but this district was also compelled to yield to arms, the

progress of which nothing could stop. There was not much blood spilt on this spot, and the Indians are still more numerous here than anywhere else. As the province abounds only in corn, fruits, and pasturage, few of the conquerors settled in it; and this is perhaps the reason why man is less degraded, and less degenerated here, than in those districts that are full of mines, or advantageously situated for trade. The natives shew some intelligence, and a degree of aptitude for the arts, and they speak a language which is soft, and hath even some sort of elegance. These qualities are especially remarkable at Chiapa de Los Indios, a city of some importance, where the most considerable families of the natives have taken refuge, which they alone occupy, and where they enjoy great privileges. The dexterity and courage of these men, who are less oppressed than their neighbours, is habitually displayed upon the river which washes their walls. With a number of boats they form naval armaments, institute sea-fights with each other, and attack and defend themselves with surprising agility. They build up castles of wood, which they cover with painted linen, and lay siege to them. They do not less excell in bull-fighting, cudgelling, dancing, and all bodily exercise. How much will these accounts make us regret, that the Indians should have fallen under the power of a conqueror, who hath contracted, instead of enlarging, the bonds of their servitude.

The province of Guatemala hath, in common with the other provinces dependent upon it, cattle, mines, corn, maize, sugar, and cotton: but none of the rest share with it the advantage of cultivating indigo. It is upon its territory that a city bearing its name is situated, where all the offices of administration, and all the tribunals necessary for the government of so large a country, are united.

This celebrated city was built, whether properly or improperly, in a valley about three miles broad, and bounded by two lofty mountains. From the mountain towards the south run several rivulets and fountains, which delightfully refresh the villages that are situated on the declivity, and keep up a perpetual succession of flowers and fruits. The aspect of the mountain that is to the north is terrible. There is no verdure ever seen upon it; nothing but ashes, and calcined stones. A kind of rumbling noise, which the

inhabitants ascribe to the boiling of metals that are in a state of fusion within the caverns of the earth, is continually heard. From these internal furnaces issue flames and torrents of sulphur, which fill the air with a horrible infection. Guatimala, according to an expression much used, is situated between paradise and hell.

The articles that are wanted in Peru, are dispatched from this capital by the South sea. The gold, the silver, and the indigo destined for this continent, are carried upon mules to the town of St. Thomas, situated at the distance of sixty leagues from the city, at the extremity of a very deep lake, which loses itself in the gulf of Honduras. All these riches are exchanged in this staple for the merchandize that is brought from Europe in the months of July and August. This place is entirely open, though it would have been very easy to have secured it from every attack; the more so as its entrance is rendered narrow by two high rocks, which project on each side within cannon-shot of each other. It is probable that Spain will not alter her conduct till she hath suffered for her negligence; which she might easily be made to do.

The vessels that should undertake this expedition might anchor in perfect safety in the road. A thousand or twelve hundred men, landing at St. Thomas, might pass over the mountains for the space of fifteen leagues, where they would find commodious roads and subsistence. The rest of their way would be across plains that are well peopled and plentiful. They would then arrive at Guatimala, in which there is not a single soldier, nor the least fortification. Its forty thousand souls, Indians, negroes, mestees, and Spaniards, who have never seen an enemy, would be incapable of making the least resistance. In order to save their lives, they would deliver up the immense riches they have been accumulating for more than two centuries, which would amount at least to thirty millions [1,250,000l.] The troops would reembark with this booty, and, if they chose it, with hostages that would secure their retreat.

Unfortunately this danger cannot now be incurred. A dreadful earthquake hath completely destroyed Guatimala in 1772. This city, one of the richest in America, presents nothing but a heap of ruins.

In other countries such a city would soon be restored

again ; for what cannot active and industrious nations do ? By them, regions that were thought uninhabitable are peopled ; the most ungrateful soil is rendered fruitful ; the waters are driven back, and this fertility arises from the slime ; morasses are made to bear houses ; and man cuts roads for himself through the bodies of mountains. He separates, or connects together at pleasure, the rocks, by bridges which are, as it were, suspended over the obscure depth of the abyss, at the bottom of which the angry torrent seems to murmur at his boldness. He raises dikes against the swelling of the sea, and sleeps with tranquillity in the dwelling which he hath founded on the waves. He collects together a few planks, and sitting down upon them, orders the winds to convey him to the extremity of the globe, and the winds obey his commands. O man ! that art sometimes so pusillanimous and so little, how great dost thou appear in thy projects, and in thine actions ; with two feeble levers of flesh, and assisted only by thine understanding, thou dost attack the whole system of nature, and dost subdue her ! Thou bravest the conspiring elements, and dost reduce them to obedience ! Nothing can resist thee, whether thy soul be tormented with love, or with the desire of possessing some beautiful woman, destined one day to become the object of thine aversion ; whether it be swayed by interest, or by the rage of filling thy coffers with riches, from which thou dost flatter thyself with the prospect of enjoyments, which thou wilt reject when in thy power ; or whether it be stimulated with the thirst of glory, or the ambition of obtaining the applause of thy contemporaries whom thou dost despise, or of posterity, which cannot certainly have a stronger claim to thy reverence ! If thou dost great things from passion, thou dost others equally great from a spirit of restlessness and inquietude. Thou wast acquainted with but one world ; and when thou didst conjecture the existence of another, thou didst go in search of it, and didst find it. I have progressively followed thy footsteps in this New World. If the boldness of thine enterprises should sometimes have concealed their enormity from me, I am still equally confounded, whether thy crimes freeze me with horror, or thy virtues transport me with admiration.

Such is the picture of the ferocious Spaniards who conquered America ; but the nature of the climate, a vicious

administration, and the plentiful enjoyment of all things, enervated their descendants. Every undertaking which carried with it the least difficulty, was found to be above the efforts of their corrupted minds; and their effeminate arms refused every kind of labour. During this long period, a state of lethargy prevailed, of which there are few examples in history. How was it possible, that in such a state, a city swallowed up by volcanoes, should have been raised out of its ruins? But for some years past, the spirit of the nation hath been reviving. Already hath the plan of another city been traced, more spacious, more convenient, more beautiful, than the former: and it will be erected at the distance of eight leagues from that, upon a more solid basis. Already hath the court of Madrid, contrary to their usual and too tardy modes of proceeding, set aside the funds necessary for the construction of the public edifices. Already do the inhabitants, relieved from those tributes which might have served as a reason or as a pretence for their inactivity, coincide with the views of government. New Spain will soon be embellished with a New Guatimala. If this exertion should continue, or if it should increase, the English will probably be driven from the settlements they have begun between the Lake of Nicaragua and Cape Honduras.

THIS district occupies one hundred and eighty leagues of the coast, and runs back into the inland parts, as far as some very high mountains at a greater or less distance from the ocean. *Description of Honduras, Jucatan, and Campeachy.*

The climate is wholesome and temperate. The soil is commonly even, very well watered, and seems fit for all the productions cultivated between the tropics. The inhabitants are not here exposed to those frequent droughts and terrible hurricanes, which, in the islands of the New World, so often frustrate the most reasonable expectations.

The country is chiefly inhabited by the Moskito Indians. These people were formerly numerous; but the small-pox hath considerably diminished their population. It is not supposed that their several tribes can at present put more than nine or ten thousand men under arms.

A nation, still less populous, is fixed in the environs of.

Cape Gracias-à-Dios. These are the Samboes, descendants, as it is said, of the crew of a Guinea ship which was shipwrecked in these latitudes. Their complexion, their features, their hair, and their propensities, will scarce allow us to assign any other origin to them.

The English are the only Europeans, whom their cupidity hath induced to settle in these savage regions.

Their first establishment was formed about the year 1730, at twenty-six leagues distance from Cape Honduras. Its position, at the extremity of the coast, and upon the Black river, which hath no more than six feet water at its mouth, will probably always retard and prevent its progress.

At the distance of fifty-four leagues from this colony is Gracias-à-Dios; the harbour of which formed by an arm of the sea, is immense, and tolerably safe. It is near this famous cape that the English have fixed themselves, upon a navigable river, the borders of which are very fertile.

Seventy leagues beyond this, this enterprising nation have found, at Blue-field, some spacious and fruitful plains, an accessible river, a convenient harbour, and a rock which might easily be made impregnable.

In 1769, the three factories did not employ more than two hundred and six white men, as many mulattoes, and nine hundred slaves. Exclusive of the mules and other articles sent to Jamaica, they sent this year to Europe eight hundred thousand feet of mahogany, two hundred thousand pounds weight of sarsaparilla, and ten thousand pounds of tortoise-shell. The number of hands hath been since increased. Sugar-canes have begun to be planted; and the first sugar they have yielded hath been found to be of a superior quality. Some careful observers affirm, that a quiet possession of the Moskito country, would one day be more valuable to Great Britain, than all the islands which that nation now possesses in the West Indies.

The English do not seem to form the least doubt respecting their right of property. Never, say the writers of this country, did Spain subdue these people, and never did these people submit to Spain. They were by right, and *ipso facto*, independent, when, in 1670, their chiefs, of their own accord, had recourse to England, and acknowledged its sovereignty. So little was this submission com-

pelled, that it was renewed at several intervals. At their solicitation, the court of London sent, in 1741, a body of troops upon this territory; and these were soon followed by a civil administration. If, after the peace of 1763, the troops and the magistrates were withdrawn, and if the fortifications, raised for the security of the savages and their protectors, were demolished, this was owing to the ignorance of the ministry, who suffered themselves to be persuaded that the Muskito country made part of the bay of Honduras. This mistake having been removed, a regular form of government hath again been established in these regions at the beginning of 1776.

We should not scruple to enter upon the discussion of these great interests, if the powers which they concern conducted themselves with reason and justice: but it is strength and convenience that settles every thing between them, although none of them have had the boldness to acknowledge it. Monarchs, what is that false shame which checks you? Since equity is for you nothing but an idle name, why do ye not avow it? Of what use are those treaties which cannot guarantee the continuation of peace, to which the weakest is compelled to accede; which denote nothing in either of the contracting parties, except their being exhausted of the means to continue the war; and which are always infringed? It would be better that ye should sign only a suspension of hostilities, without fixing the duration of it. If ye have resolved to be unjust, cease, at least, to be perfidious; for perfidy is a base and odious vice, inconsistent with the dignity of potentates. The fox in the lion's skin, or the lion in the fox's skin, are two animals equally ridiculous. But, instead of addressing our discourse to deaf persons, whom we cannot convince of any thing, and whom we may offend, let us give some account of the bay of Honduras and Campeachy, and of the peninsula of Yucatan, which separates them.

This peninsula is a hundred leagues in length, and twenty or five and twenty in breadth. The country is entirely level. There is neither a river nor a stream to be seen in it: but the water is everywhere so near the surface of the earth, and the shells are everywhere found in so great abundance, that this large space must formerly have made

part of the sea. The first Spaniards who appeared upon these coasts found, according to Herrera, a very singular custom established there. The men generally carried about them some looking glasses made of a shining stone, in which they incessantly viewed themselves, while the women never made any use of this instrument, which is of so much value to beauty.

If the continual use which women make in our country of a looking-glass only shews the desire that they have of making themselves agreeable to the men, by adding to the charms which they have received from nature, every attention that art can give them; the men would be taking the same trouble at Jucatan, in order to please the women. But it is so singular a fact, that we may reasonably call it in question, unless it be supported by another, still more extraordinary, which is, that the men devote themselves to idleness, while the women are condemned to labour. When the functions peculiar to the two sexes are perverted, I shall not be surprised to find in one the frivolousness of the other.

The Jucatan, Honduras, and Campeachy, did not offer to the devastators of the new hemisphere those rich metals for which they had crossed so many seas. Accordingly, they neglected and despised these regions. Few of them settled there; and those who came there by chance soon contracted the indolence of the Indians. None of them attended to the cultivation of productions fit for exportation. In common with the colonies which had been destroyed or enslaved, they lived upon cacao and maize; to which they had added the easy and convenient resource of cattle brought from the Old World. In order to pay for their clothing, which they either would not, or knew not how to make themselves, and for some other articles of moderate value, which they were supplied with from Europe, they had properly no other resource, than a kind of wood for dying, known in all the markets by the name of Campeachy or logwood.

The tree which furnishes it is rather high, hath alternate leaves, composed of eight smaller ones, in form of a heart, and disposed in two rows along one common costa. Its flowers, which are small and reddish, are collected in clusters.

at the extremities of the branches. They have each of them a calix of a single piece; from the bottom of each arise five petals, and ten distinct stamina; the pistil, placed in the centre, becomes a small oval pod, flattened, and divided longitudinally into two ovals filled with two or three seeds. The most internal part of the wood, which is at first red, becomes black some time after the wood hath been felled. It is only this inner part of the tree that yields this black and violet colour.

The taste for these colours, which was perhaps more general two centuries ago than it is at present, procured a considerable vent for this precious wood. This sale was for the benefit of the Spaniards alone, till the settlement of the English at Jamaica.

Among the multitude of pirates who were continually coming from this famous island, several went to cruise in the two bays, and on the coasts of the peninsula, to intercept the vessels that sailed there. These plunderers were so little acquainted with the value of their cargo, that, when they found barks laden with it, they took away nothing but the iron utensils. One of them having carried off a large vessel, which had nothing else but the logwood on board, brought it into the Thames, designing only to equip it as a privateer; when, contrary to his expectation, he sold at a very high price the wood which he had thought to be of so little value, that he had always burnt it during his voyage. After this discovery, the pirates, who were not successful at sea, never failed to repair to the river of Champeton, where they took on board the piles of wood which were always found ranged on the shore.

The peace of the English with Spain having put a stop to the depredations of these pirates, several of them employed themselves in cutting Indian wood. Cape Catoche furnished them at first with abundance. As soon as they perceived it diminish, they went to settle between Tabasco and the river of Champeton, about Lake Triste, and in Beef island, which is very near it. In 1675, their numbers amounted to two hundred and sixty. Their ardour, which at first was extreme, soon gave way: and the habit of idleness prevailed. As the greatest part of them were excellent marksmen, the chase became their predominant passion; and their former inclination to plunder was rekind-

led in them by this exercise. They soon began to make inroads into the Indian towns, the inhabitants of which they carried off. The women were destined to wait on them; and the men they sold at Jamaica, or other islands. The Spaniards roused from their lethargy by these enormities, surprised them in the midst of their debaucheries, and carried them off. Most of them were even taken in their cottages: they were led prisoners to Mexico, where they ended their days in the mines.

Those who escaped took refuge in the gulf of Honduras, where they were joined by some wandering freebooters of North America. In process of time they increased to fifteen hundred men. The state of independence and plenty in which they lived rendered the marshy country they inhabited agreeable to them. Strong intrenchments secured them and their provisions; and they confined themselves to those employments which their unhappy companions lamented that they had ever neglected. They only took care not to penetrate into the interior part of the country, to cut wood, without being well armed.

Their industry was crowned with the greatest success. In reality, the ton of wood, which had been sold as high as nine hundred livres [37l. 10s.] was gradually fallen to a very low price; but this disadvantage in the price was compensated by the quantity that was sold. The cutters delivered up the produce of their labours, either to the people of Jamaica, who brought them Madeira wine, strong liquors, linens, and clothes; or to the English colonies of North America, which supplied them with provisions. This commerce, which was always carried on by smugglers, and which occasioned much clamour, became lawful in 1763. The liberty of cutting logwood was secured to Great Britain; but she was not permitted to raise forts, and was even obliged to destroy those which had been built. The court of Madrid seldom have made any sacrifices so great as that of establishing, in the centre of their possessions, an active, powerful, and ambitious nation. Accordingly, soon after the peace, they sought to render even this concession, which unfortunate circumstances had extorted, almost useless.

The wood which grows upon the dry soil at Campeachy is much superior to that which is cut in the marshes of

Honduras. The last-mentioned wood was, however, most in use, because the price of the former had, for a long time past, exceeded all bounds. This deficiency in the sale was a just punishment of the blindness and avidity of the treasury. The Spanish ministry at length understood this great truth. The merchandize was disburdened of all the duties with which it had been oppressed; it was freed from all the shackles which impeded its circulation, and then it had a large vent in all the markets. Soon after this, the English found no sale for their commodities. The court of Madrid, without having failed in their engagements, will find themselves freed from a competition, which rendered the possession of two large provinces useless to them. The port of Cadiz sometimes receives the wood directly from the place it comes from; but it is more frequently sent to Vera Cruz, which is the true point of union between Mexico and Spain.

OLD Vera Cruz served at first for a mart. This town, founded by Cortez on the very spot where he first landed, is situated on the borders of a river, which is dry one part of the year, but which in the rainy season is capable of receiving the largest vessels. The danger to which the seamen were exposed, in a situation where nothing defended them against the violence of the winds so common in these latitudes, induced them to seek for more secure shelter, which they found eighteen miles lower down on the same coast. There they built New Vera Cruz, at seventy-two leagues distance from the capital of the empire.

It is chiefly by Vera Cruz that Mexico communicates with Spain.

New Vera Cruz is situated in a climate rendered disagreeable and unwholesome by a burning sun, and by frequent storms. It is bounded on the north by dry sands, and on the west by infectious morasses. The buildings are all of wood. The only inhabitants are, a moderate garrison, some agents of government, the navigators arriving from Europe, and the commissioners that are necessary to receive and expedite the cargoes. This harbour is formed by the small island of St. Juan de Ulloa. It hath the disadvantage of not being able to hold more than thirty or thirty-five vessels, which are not always sheltered from the

northern winds. The entrance into it is by two channels only, which are so narrow, that they will not admit more than one ship at a time. The sea in the neighbourhood is likewise extremely dangerous, on account of a great number of rocks almost even with the surface of the water. It was generally thought by the pilots of the country, that nothing but a complete knowledge of the situation, acquired by many years experience, could possibly have enabled them to avoid so many shoals. Some desperate pirates having surpris'd the place in 1712, towers were then constructed on the shore, where vigilant centinels are continually on guard for the common safety.

It is into this bad harbour, which is properly the only one there is in the gulf, that the fleet arrives, the destination of which is to furnish Mexico with provisions. The ships that bring them do not land in succession. They are fitted out at Cadiz, with a convoy, every two, three, or four years, as occasions and circumstances require. They are usually from twelve to fourteen large merchant ships, escorted by two ships of the line, or by a greater number, if public tranquillity be disturbed or threatened. In order to prevent the dangers to which they might be exposed at landing, by the hurricanes, they set out from Spain in the months of February, May, or June. In their passage, they take in refreshments at Porto Rico, and arrive, after a voyage of seventy or eighty days, at Vera Cruz, from whence their whole cargo is conveyed by mules to Xalapa.

In this town, which is situated twelve leagues from the harbour, on the back of a mountain, and well built, is kept a fair, which was limited by the ancient regulations to six weeks, but which at present lasts four months, and which is sometimes prolonged to a further period, at the solicitation of the Spanish or Mexican merchants. When the commercial transactions are finished, the metals, and other articles given by Mexico in exchange for the productions and merchandize of Europe, are sent to Vera Cruz, where they are embarked for our hemisphere. The seasons for dispatching them are not all equally favourable. It would be dangerous to put to sea in the months of August and September, and impossible to do it in October and November. The fleet always takes the route of the Havannah, where it is joined by vessels from Honduras, Carthageua,

and other places. It stops there ten or twelve days, to take in fresh provisions, and to allow time to the ships to freight themselves with sugar, tobacco, and other articles supplied by the island of Cuba. The ships then sail through the straits of Bahama; they continue their course to the height of New England, and after sailing for a long time in this latitude of forty degrees, they at length veer to the south-east, to come in view of Cape St. Vincent, and to proceed to Cadiz.

In the interval between the sailing of one fleet and the other, the court of Madrid sends out one or two men of war, which are called *azogues*, to carry to Mexico the quicksilver that is necessary for working the mines. This quicksilver was originally drawn from Peru; but the commissions were so uncertain, so slow, and so often fraudulent, that in 1734 it was judged to be more convenient to send it from Europe. The mines of Guadalcanal at first furnished the means. These were afterwards forsaken for the richer mines of Almaden, in Estramadura. The *azogues*, on their return, take charge of the produce of the sales that have been made since the departure of the fleet, of the sums repaid for credit granted, and of the funds which the Mexican merchants choose to employ on their own account in the next expedition. The government habitually allows three or four merchantmen to accompany these ships. Their whole cargo should consist of fruits and liquors; but other important articles are fraudulently introduced. These merchantmen always return with their ballast, unless by special favour they should be allowed to take in some cochineal.

If the departure of the fleet be delayed from reasons of convenience or policy, the court sends one of its ships from the Havannah to Vera Cruz. It there takes charge of every thing that belongs to government, and of the metals which the debtors, or speculating persons, choose to send from the new hemisphere into the old.

From 1748 to 1753, one year with another, New Spain sent to the mother-country, by the way of Vera Cruz and of Honduras, 62,661,466 livres [2,610,894*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.*] 574,550 [23939*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*] of which were in gold 43,621,497 [1,817,562*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*] in silver, and 18,465,519 [769,392*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.*] in productions, at the price in Europe.

Of the productions, there were to the amount of 529,200 livres [22,094l. 19s. 4d.] for the crown, and 17,936,219 [747,342l. 9s. 2d.] for the merchants.

Of the gold and silver, there were to the amount of 25,649,040 livres [1,048,710l.] for trade, 12,067,007 livres [502,791l. 19s. 2d.] for the agents of the government, or for private persons who meant to remit their fortunes to Europe, and 6,480,000 livres [270,000l.] for the government.

The court of Madrid cannot fail of seeing this tribute increase; and it is upon the following reasons that this conjecture is founded.

Mexico was formerly without any means of defence: for what was to be expected from a few tradesmen, whom each city had put under arms, when the state was threatened with any danger of greater or less importance? Six regiments of infantry and two of cavalry were soon formed out of these scattered militia, and who have since been disciplined by officers sent from Europe. Time extended the ideas of government. Men, accustomed to the occupations of the arts and of commerce, did not appear to afford a sufficient support to authority; and it was determined to raise, in the country itself, two battalions of infantry, and two regiments of dragoons, who should have none other but the military profession. After the peace of 1763, the government thought that a people enervated by idleness and by the climate were but ill adapted to war; and they sent some regular troops from the mother-country into the colony. This system is still followed, and there are always three or four battalions from our continent at Mexico, which are only relieved after they have staid there four years.

To these means of preservation others have been added, not less effectual. The island of St. Juan de Ulloa, which forms the harbour of Vera Cruz, and which is to defend it, had but a few bad fortifications. These have been razed. Some extensive and solid works, calculated to make the most obstinate resistance, have been lately constructed upon their ruins, and in the body of the rock. If, contrary to every appearance, this key of Mexico should be forced, the country, even after this misfortune, would not be without defence. At the distance of four-and-twenty leagues from

the sea, and at the opening of the mountains, in a plain which nothing can command, the foundations of the magnificent citadel of Perole were laid in 1770. The arsenals, the barracks, the magazines, and every part of it, are bomb-proof.

According to all appearances, the court of Madrid will never lessen the number of troops they keep in New Spain: but that part of the public revenue which the fortifications used to absorb, cannot fail of increasing their treasures, unless they should employ them in the colony itself, in forming some useful establishments. Already large docks are opened upon the borders of the river Alvarado, where woods for ship-building abound. This novelty is of fortunate presage, and will undoubtedly be followed by others. Perhaps, after having remained for three centuries in a state of oppression or lethargy, Mexico will at length fulfil the important destination to which it hath been so long called up in vain by nature. In this comfortable hope, let us take our leave of North America, in order to get into the southern part of that continent, where we shall see, by an arrangement of Providence which will never change, the same effects produced by the same causes, the same animosities excited by the same barbarity, the same precautions suggested by the same apprehensions, the same oppositions raised by the same jealousies; where we shall see one robbery giving rise to another, one disgrace avenged by a subsequent disgrace; where we shall still see stupid perseverance in evil, and find a lesson of unavailing experience.

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